

i found you (hidden in plain sight)

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by [navyhurricane](#)

Summary

“Oh, well, Puffy did most of it,” George deflects, but Dream shakes his head.

“She told me it was your idea. I think you should take the credit, it was a good one.” Dream licks his lips and something like nervousness crosses his face.

“It means I finally got to meet the pretty teacher my daughter adores.”

George is a daycare teacher, and what seems like a random activity with the local paramedics becomes something more when they click so easily, and George finds himself falling for an amazing father with an adorable daughter.

Notes

for rowan, who has been the number one fan in my dms since i started this fic<3
ty to my lovely beta [ash](#), i have no idea what i would do without you lmao

and now...

hello everyone! welcome to my latest multichap :D

i adore kidfics so i hope you guys like this one!! chapter posts will be once every two days, so expect another one on tuesday:)

(tags will also be updated with the chapters, so not to give spoilers)

until then, happy reading!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

“Alright everyone, clap once if you hear me, clap twice if you hear me!”

Three claps echo around the room, small hands making it happen. George smiles down at the kids surrounding him in a circle, captivating their attention with practised ease.

“We have a special day coming up, so I want you guys to pay attention, alright?” George taps the toe of his sneaker against the tile floor and holds up his hands, commanding the attention of about ten kids like a miniature army. “Hands up, who here likes... the color blue?”

A few hands shoot up and George looks around the room. It’s nice in here, large windows with thicker glass and plenty of sunlight, a few hanging planters well out of grabbing reach and teeny pots on the windowsill that contain little sprouts. There are a few tissue paper decorations that cast little rainbows on the floor, and the indoor wind chime George put up sways by itself.

George smiles at the faces looking up at him, gathered in a circle on the carpet under his feet. “Nice, that’s my favorite colour, too. Okay, put your hands down. I want to know... who likes learning?”

All of the hands in the room shoot up and George laughs at the kids; whoever said that children hate school was a fucking *liar* because kids are little sponges, always soaking up new information and never fulfilling their desire for more.

“Okay, who can tell me where we like learning from. Adam?”

A boy sitting on the outside of the circle puffs his chest out. “From books!”

George nods, “From books, good. Where else... Laura?”

The girl with the dark hair grins toothily at George and folds her hands on her crossed ankles. George smiles back at her and she seems to vibrate in her spot. “Teachers, Mister George.”

“Lovely, good answer Laura,” George says, and walks a few steps back to his little desk; he grabs a sheet of paper and hides it behind his back, a gleam of excitement in his eyes that matches the kids’. “So, for the special day that’s coming, we are going to have a new teacher in our classroom. This teacher is kind of different, though, they’re not like me but they still want to see you guys!”

George flips the paper in front of him, and scans over the bolded letters.

“Shout out your answers, what do ambulances do?”

“They have sirens!” Jared says, and another little girl mumbles a variance of that statement.

“They, um—” Katarina stutters, and George looks directly at her and waits for her to finish her sentence, “T-they go and save people.”

“Have flashing lights!”

“Cool colours!”

George claps his hands together twice and the kids follow, clapping three times rapidly. The room goes silent, and George looks down at the paper he tucked under his arm.

“I’m sure you’ve figured it out already, but the guest we have coming works in an ambulance! They’re going to show us the inside and outside, see what everything does and explain a few of your questions for you. Do we have any questions?”

Laura puts her hand up again, and George picks her. “Is that today, Mister George?”

George hums, and puts his paper down on the desk. He leans against it and checks the calendar for dramatic effect even though he knows what day the ambulance and paramedics are coming. “It’s not today, but they’re coming tomorrow around lunchtime, so we have plenty of time to think of questions for them. Anyone else?”

“Who’s coming?”

“Mm, not sure yet. I guess I’ll find out at the same time as you, yeah?” The kids seem satisfied with that, and George moves his hand in a shooing motion. “Alright then, you have free time for a bit and then we can think about going to the park. Mister Karl is going to come with us if it’s nice out.”

That earns him a round of toothy smiles and giggles, and the children disperse throughout the room to find various activities. George watches them, adjusts the wire glasses on his nose by the temples and turns back to his desk.

The daycare is a nice place to be. He likes working here, has since it opened two years ago and met plenty of people along the way. Captain’s Care is on the smaller side and owned by a nice lady named Puffy, who drops in sometimes to say hello and work on the accounting side of things. George likes her and they get along, and she sometimes mentions her son and treats George the same way.

Karl is the other worker here; he and George are basically best friends, managing an average of about seven children between them almost daily and honestly loving every bit of it. The kids here are the ones not quite old enough for Kindergarten, but just too old for the parent to stay home for childcare; some days they get those not attending Kindergarten, so around five to six. George doesn’t care; babbling four year olds that are full of questions and five year olds that are in love with arts and crafts make his day, and George wouldn’t rather be anywhere else.

George sets the paper down. He really didn’t have much of a clue who was coming, but it was Puffy’s idea and she said that she could vouch for the person doing the teaching. He’s got a criminal record check from the guy as well, and it’s supposed to be coming to his inbox today. Maybe then he’ll figure out exactly who’s coming.

There’s a tug to his pant leg and George looks down. Katarina stands beside him, nervous hands and wide eyes as she looks up at him through purple rimmed glasses. George smiles and tilts his head at the girl.

“Hi, Rina. What’s up?”

She winds a finger around a blond curl and squirms on her feet, mouth opening and then closing just as fast. George peeks around at the other kids — everyone looks occupied, safe and busy — and then crouches down beside her. “Are you having a good morning?”

Katarina looks sideways at him and nods her head, and George smiles. “Good, that’s good. I had a good morning too, did you want me to talk about it until you find your words?”

A small nod. George motions at the carpet, where the kids were all sitting minutes prior, and both

him and Katarina sit down on it. He crosses his legs under him, smoothing out the charcoal grey of his pants and waiting until Katarina joins him. She doesn't sit the same way, but instead tucks her knees to her chest and puts her chin on top.

George gently claps his hands together. "So, this morning I made tea. I'm not a fan of coffee, really, but it's okay if I'm out of my favourite drink. Do you have a favourite drink?"

Katarina takes a second, and then she nods. "I like apple juice."

"Yeah? Me too," George grins, "I think it's better than orange juice, if I'm honest. Okay, so next I fed my cat—"

"You have a cat?" Katarina asks, a smile spreading over her face and George nods enthusiastically.

"I do! Her name is Cat—I know, it's unoriginal but she's super cute, so it's alright. Do you like cats?"

"Mhm!" Katarina's knees fall and she adjusts her sitting position to mirror George's. Her fingers tap at her pants and her eyes are bright now, excited over the bridge of her freckled nose. "We have a cat too! Her name is Patches. She's got stripes and she's kinda orange, and she really likes shoes."

"Oh, so does she like your shoes?"

"She likes to sleep on them. I had to move her this morning because I wanted these ones, they're my favorite." Katarina plays with the Velcro on one of her purple runners, tapping and tracing along the threads and stitching on it. "She really likes Dad's shoes too, but he always leaves at different times than me."

"I see. Does Dad drop you off here every morning?" George pulls one of his knees up to his chest, and fiddles absently with a thread on the carpet. If his hands feel empty, then he's sure Katarina's do too, so he leans back and grabs a fidget toy off his desk. They're small and cheap, but George has discovered the benefit of having them around and at arms reach.

Katarina accepts the toy and spins the joystick. "Sometimes. Sometimes Grandma brings me in with her and sometimes Mom does."

Right. Katarina is Puffy's grandchild and so Puffy's son must be her father. George wonders why he hasn't seen him, but also wonders if Puffy has any other children—

"Mister George!"

"Yes?"

"Do we have any markers?"

George offers one last smile at Katarina, a promise to keep talking right after, and looks up at Adam. The boy is standing near the shelves of arts supplies, peeking into the buckest and trying to find his utensils; the teacher hums and points at the lower shelf.

"Look down two—not that far... there you go, remember to put them back when you're finished, alright?"

"Okay!"

George settles back down and returns his attention to Katarina, who seems wholly involved with the fidget toy. He's glad that she likes it, and doesn't immediately pull her away from the little play she's in. Instead, he peeks around the little classroom and takes basic stock of the kids around here.

Adam is sitting at one of the mini tables and is well into a colouring book. George recognizes it as the one that he usually takes out during free time. Jared and Laura are playing at the sand table. Abbey is sorting out the dollhouse, laying them down in beds and having them make their imaginary breakfasts.

The door to the hallway opens and George turns his head to see Karl walk in, immediately drawing the attention of all kids in the room.

"Mister Karl!" Laura cries, and yanks her hands out of the sand table.

"Ah, Laura! Sink first, we don't want to get sand everywhere!" George calls, and her path veers off towards the two low sinks at the back of the room. Karl laughs and braces himself as Adam plows into his legs, wrapping around them in a hug like he didn't see Karl literally last week.

George stands up, offers a hand to Katarina to help her and she takes it, smiling softly at George and giving him his fidget toy back. She wanders over to Karl, surrounds him more with kids and grinning faces with the promise of a walk outside.

"Morning, Karl. You ready for a walk?"

Karl's brows raise as he nods, and George walks away as he distracts the kids. He grabs his phone from the desk, his wallet and keys, and then takes one last peek at his computer.

A new email catches his attention, and George clicks it open. The subject line reads something about the record check, and the email is from Puffy.

Hi George!

I've attached the criminal record check for our ambulance guy tomorrow so you have it on file. He should be here just after lunchtime, and I'll drop by to help with the kids right after.

Just to help you out, the paramedic usually goes by Dream. He's my son, so I have faith he'll do a good job.

Have a nice day!

Puffy

Ohh, that makes sense now. Puffy can surely vouch for her son, and it makes sense as to why Rina is mostly dropped off by her mother or grandmother. Paramedics have much more hectic schedules than calmer careered parents.

George peeks at the attached PDF and the name on it.

Clay. Puffy's son is named Clay.

Dream?

"Mister George!" George looks up over his glasses, and his gaze lands on Katarina as she waves at him. "We're going to leave you behind!"

“Coming!”

George is *nervous* .

He's not usually nervous; there's never a lot to be afraid about, he works with kids, for God's sakes, there isn't room for him to be nervous.

The kids are excited, that's for sure. Adam keeps talking about the colors and the things he thinks paramedics can do, and Laura keeps looking out of the windows like they're going to arrive any moment.

In reality, they are. It's just past lunchtime, the kids are floating around with post-meal sleepiness and buzzing ideas. They spent their entire walk yesterday preparing and thinking of questions for the paramedics and what they could get answered. Some of them weren't even ambulance based inquiries; George is pretty sure Jared is on a mission to get them to debate the differences between lake water and hose water.

George told him that one had fishes in it, and that got the kid on a tangent about sharks. Maybe he'll ask about those too.

The brunet sighs and leans back in his chair. Everyone is preoccupied for now, even if they keep walking by and staring through the window. Puffy said she would text when they were on their way, having been the one to drop Katarina off this morning and then head out to the branch office. George doesn't even know if Katarina is aware that her dad is coming today.

He glances over.

The four-year old is distracted with a book, flipping the thicker pages and mouthing the words on the pages. George smiles as a curl falls over the lense of her glasses and she flicks it away, never once breaking her concentration.

It's not the first time he's admitted he has a soft spot for that particular child, and it won't be the last. Puffy introduced them, was the first person to bring Rina to daycare and leave her there.

She had cried. Most kids do, especially on the first day. George wasn't bothered, and offered her a little corner by herself until she felt calm enough to join the rest of the kids. Katarina had spent a good two hours by herself, playing with a doll and combing her fingers through it's hair until lunchtime. Upon trying to engage her again, George received wide green eyes and a frantic shake of the head.

He left her alone again, but left a larger fidget toy beside the doll like it had been there all along. Katarina had chosen a table close to her corner and ate oranges and a sandwich with the crusts cut off, and then washed her hands and returned.

George saw the curious look she gave the toy, and then looked away himself when her gaze snapped to him. The clinking metal was lost in the sound of the classroom but George still noticed. Puffy picked her up when the day ended, and said that her mother was going to drop her off for the rest of the week.

Katarina's mother was... definitely something. She's polite and proper, fitted with a business suit and clicky heels that slip sometimes on the tile floors. A beautiful woman, sure, and if George swung that way he's sure her blond hair and blue eyes would be something he'd be into. As it turned out, he just took down her name on the sign-in sheet — Celiel, she had told him — and told her to have a good day.

Katarina introduced herself to the rest of the classroom that morning, and George got her to talk about the animal she was drawing before lunch.

He had never seen her father, though. It seemed like the elusive man had dropped off Katarina on the days George was always in the classroom and Karl was in charge of sign-ins and pick-ups. It wasn't something he was worried about, since all the parents need to write their names and numbers down for emergency purposes, but George didn't look through every single one everyday.

Besides, Katarina didn't have allergies or medical concerns. He did go through her registration, but it wasn't like he was looking for her father specifically.

George watches softly as Katarina finishes her book and immediately chooses a new one; Laura loses her interest in coloring and walks over, says something to the blonde child and they share a smile. Laura sits down beside Rina and they start reading the book, giggling as things are pointed out and explained.

Footsteps catch his attention and George swings his gaze to Wyatt, a kid who attends Captain's Care every second day when he isn't in Kindergarten. George doesn't mind him, but Wyatt is known to start shit because he's one of the oldest kids here and has an ego the size of his ears.

Jesus, George, don't bully the children .

"Mister George?" He's holding a book, but it's turned so George can't see the cover.

"Hi, Wyatt, what can I do for you?"

"What does 'exclaimed' mean?"

"Well," George taps his fingers on the desk as he turns his chair more towards Wyatt, "What do you think it means?"

Wyatt motions at his book. "They were like, yelling and stuff I think. But it wasn't angry yelling, just because they were happy I think. So, happy yelling?"

"That sounds about right." George holds a hand out for the book and Wyatt hands it over, showing the page he was on. He doesn't recognize the title, but that's alright. "Typically it means that someone is saying something loudly, or with excitement. You know how you yell when we're outside, playing tag and stuff?" Wyatt nods. "It's like that. It can be positive, which is happy, or negative, which is sad or bad. It can mean a lot of things."

"Do I need to figure it out everytime?" Wyatt frowns, and George thumbs the page over. He glances at the words and the scene, and then hands it back. "I don't want to do that."

"Mm, usually you can tell if it's good or bad with how the characters are acting. I wouldn't be shouting something happy if there were a lot of bad things going on, right?"

George pauses, waits as Wyatt purses his lips and thinks about it. The kid hums, and then looks back down at the book pages.

“I think I got it. Thanks, Mister George!”

George laughs and turns back towards his computer. “No problem, Wyatt. Let me know if you have any other questions, okay?”

He receives a nod and a half-grin, and then Wyatt is running back to his little corner to keep reading. Out of the corner of his eye, George sees Adam look out of the window. In his pocket, his phone buzzes.

“They’re here!”

Oh boy.

“Clap once if you hear me, clap twice if you hear me!”

George claps and three others follow him.

“Alright everyone, line up at the door!” George stands and the kids in the room scramble towards the exit, trying to make the line straight and tidy. Karl pokes his head in, a grin already on his face as he comes into the room and stands at the front of the line. George shakes his head with a smile and does a quick headcount. “We already went over our rules, but in order of the line, tell me what they are?”

“Don’t run into the street!”

“Ask re-respectful questions!”

“Don’t touch without asking?”

George nods at all of them, and takes the blue lanyard his keys are off his neck. “Good. Karl is going to be the line leader so we can get our outdoor shoes on, and we can head out to the parking lot. We can see what the paramedics say. Any questions?”

He’s met with silence, and then Karl opens the door to the hallway. Like little ducks, they file out of the door one after another like little ducks. George smiles, and takes one last look at the classroom before switching the light off and locking the door. The kids disperse from the line to swap out their shoes, and George bends down to help little Elody tie her laces. Somehow, her mother doesn’t understand three-year olds don’t have the fine motor skills for that yet.

The lineup is less calm as they get their hoodies and shoes on. George pulls a cardigan over his thin t-shirt, and waves at his friend by the door. Karl nods, and puts his hand on the doorknob. All of the kids snap to attention, and George chuckles.

“Alright, best behaviour, everyone! Be kind, be respectful, and most of all, be yourselves.”

Karl opens the door, and sunlight peeks through. Fall isn’t exactly cold, not yet at least, so George can get away with a light coverup and the kids are warm enough in hoodies and jackets. Their adrenaline is going to keep them warm enough anyways, and George has already prepared himself for the influx of questions when they visitors finally leave.

The first thing he sees is the ambulance. The next thing is the three people standing nearby, chatting and probably soaking up the nice sunlight. George shuts and locks the door behind him, grinning to himself as the *oo’s* and *ah’s* escape from the kids. Then, he hears a gasp.

“Dad!”

George turns around to see Katarina frozen in her spot, grinning wildly at one of the three standing there. When he looks at the object of her attention, his own breath catches.

Katarina's father is, simply put, *hot*. He's blond and tall, with the same wide grin on his face and broad shoulders. Dream looks good in the navy blue one piece, cinched at the waist — Jesus, his *waist* —and exposing the muscles on his arms under the shortsleeves.

There's a few things on his belt, pouches and whatnot, and George watches as the man waves with a large hand. Katarina moves like she's going to dart forward, but stops and looks back at George with pleading eyes. George is a weak, weak man and, after a glance around the parking lot to ensure nobody is driving through it, nods at the small girl.

Her face breaks into a smile and she flies towards her father, who crouches and holds his arms out to catch her. The force of a child nearly bowls him over, but George is subjected to the most beautiful laughter he's ever heard in his life before.

He hardly registers Puffy walking over until she pats him on the shoulder. "So! How'd the morning go?"

"Good, I think. They were all excited for this, so it wasn't hard to manage them." George tears his eyes away from Dream and his daughter, and smiles at Puffy. "Thanks for suggesting it. I think it'll be really cool for them, they seem to be enjoying it already."

It's the truth. Karl took the kids closer, and is chatting with the other paramedic that came along with Dream. George vaguely remembers something about seeing a Nick in his folder, but his attention at that time was on Dream. The kids are gathered around Karl, peering at the ambulance and it's shiny metal side; George swears they're close enough for their noses to brush the red stripes.

"It's fun! Besides, Rina gets to see her father when he's 'working', so that's something special for her." Puffy smiles and gazes at her son and granddaughter, and George finds himself doing the same. Dream adjusts the purple lenses on the child's face and they share a laugh, then Dream is standing up. Katarina's hand looks *tiny* in his hold, but Dream's hands are gentle as he pulls her over to the rest of the kids.

Puffy nudges him. "Dream is pretty good with kids, as you can tell, but feel free to help with anything you see fit. I don't think there will be a problem."

"Sounds good. Are you sticking around?"

She shrugs. "I might. At least until I can say bye to Rina, because Dream is picking her up tonight. First time in a while he's had the time off to do so."

George nods and they walk closer to the kids. Dream is talking to them about the ambulance right now, the backdoors swung wide open as he captures every kid's attention. He's sure as shit got George's too, one hand sweeping towards the vehicle and the other still tenderly holding his daughters; Rina never let go, and Dream didn't either.

"He seems like he knows what he's doing," George laughs quietly, and Puffy grins.

"Katarina is a handful, that's for sure. I'm surprised she hasn't given you trouble yet."

"Rina?" George looks back at the little girl, who's staring up at her father with adoring eyes that absolutely melt both George and Dream, if the smiles the blond keeps angling down say anything. "I've never had issues, she's been perfect."

Puffy makes a small noise of astonishment, and George trails his gaze up from Katarina to the hand she's holding. Then, he keeps going up, up—

A golden gaze meets his, connects over the children's heads, and George's lips part.

He looks away. Dream stumbles over his sentence but keeps going.

George is just thinking he got away with that when--

“You know what, maybe I'll hang around after as well. You and Dream have never met, right?”

Oh my God .

George looks over at Puffy, who's got a wide and mischievous grin on her face; he fumbles, looks for an explanation as to why he was just ogling his boss's son — at work! He's literally working! — when the woman laughs and looks back at the kids.

“Don't worry, I'm sure he's just as eager to meet you. Didn't I say I can vouch for my son?”

“Well, yes, but—“

“Trust me on this one, George.” Her eyes gleam with mirth and even under that, honesty. “A mother knows best. Wait a bit after and talk to Dream.”

George sighs, but it's content and he feels safe about this. “Alright. Are you setting me up?”

“I would never.”

“I thought mothers don't lie?”

“Hm, touché.”

The showing goes by smoothly. Dream works super well with the kids, answering questions as they come like he's been doing it his entire life. His partner, whose name George learns is Nick but goes mostly by Sapnap, is also a good candidate for working with kids. Maybe he doesn't have the same charm that a young dad does, but he's still got a nice smile and kind words and George can tell Karl is completely enamoured.

“Mister Dream!” Adam's hand shoots up and Dream looks over.

“Go ahead, little man.”

“Do you save lives?”

Dream's brow quirks and as George floats a little closer, he can already tell what question might come next. George looks up and makes brief eye contact with Dream, and realizes Dream is also aware of the train of thought. “I definitely try to, that's part of my job. We don't just run around with cool lights. Oh, speaking of...” The blond motions his hand at Sapnap, who says something to a smiling Karl and then walks around the side of the ambulance. “I don't want to worry the neighborhood and hurt your ears with the sirens, but we can turn the lights on for you. Cool?”

Adam's face lights up, along with the rest of the kids in the group. Katarina has let go of Dream's hand, but is tucked against his leg like she belongs there. Judging by the comfortable way Dream maneuvers with her, it's a common practise.

George relaxes as the question he thought was coming is avoided. Nobody likes being asked if

they've had people *die* , and even though they went over things to avoid beforehand, he's sure it would have slipped the ambitious mind of a four year old. As he blows out a soft breath, Dream seeks out his gaze again and smiles gently. Then, like he wants to prove he's good at his job or something, Dream *winks*.

The teacher blinks. Heat rushes to his cheeks and he physically fumbles, but luckily the flashing lights of the ambulance draw a bit of Dream's attention away, along with the kids. He doesn't know what to do with that, not the wink or the golden gaze that finds him again — George can feel it on his skin, he knows Dream is looking — and bites down on the smile that tugs at his cheeks.

It feels nice, being flirted with again. He's hardly had time for dating, let alone finding someone that likes men, and now he finds one in the parent of one of his daycare kids?

Puffy was right. Maybe mothers do know best.

But... isn't Dream married? Or at least *with* the mother of Katarina.

George eyes his hands. He doesn't see a wedding band, but that also doesn't mean anything. Out of pure selfish desire, he hopes that Dream isn't dating the woman, but then again he doesn't get his hopes up.

The children run out of questions soon enough, and a quick glance to his watch tells George it's nearing the time for the last snack. He motions at Karl, who's been sucked back into the world of his paramedic, and he starts rounding up the kids. George sees a flash of phone numbers being exchanged, and smiles as Karl tells the kids to line back up.

George turns around to see Dream crouching again, talking quietly to a pouting Katarina. He frowns softly, and walks over.

“—I know, but I'll be back in like, an hour? Sap and I just have to drop the ambulance off, and then I'll come get you.”

Katarina pouts harder. “But I don't want you to leave again!”

“Duckling, I'm not leaving forever.” Dream glances up at George, and then back down at his daughter. He smiles, and George feels his heart clench. “I'm not allowed to bring the 'lance home, they need it at the hospital, remember?”

“Mm, right...”

“And...” Dream looks back at George, “Mister George is still here. You always tell me about him, so you aren't going to be totally alone, hm?”

George swallows at the sound of his name on Dream's tongue, and crouches down beside Katarina. “Your dad is right, y'know. You can spend the rest of the day with me and we can see who can untangle the metal loops faster. Does that sound fun?”

“But—“ Katarina snuffles and George's heart cracks. This child has him wrapped around her little fingers, God. “But you said nobody can beat your record.”

George grins, and cups his hand like he's going to tell a secret. Dream watches with gleaming eyes, and maybe because he knows he can pass it off as something *friendly*, George looks over briefly just so he can wink at the blond.

Dream blinks, blushes. George smiles.

“That’s because they don’t know the tricks. I’ll teach you those, and then we can have a race, yeah?”

Katarina’s face goes from tearful to excited, and she looks around at the line slowly heading back to the building. Her head turns back, and as George stands, she tackles Dream in another hug and rips away just as fast.

“Bye Dad! I gotta go practice so I can beat Mister George.”

Dream snorts and waves at his daughter as she runs away, curls streaming behind her and purple runners pounding the pavement like she’s trying to win a medal. He crosses his arms as he stands back up, and George tries his best to keep his gaze shoulders and higher. It doesn’t really work when Dream is almost a solid foot taller, but he puts in an effort.

“She really does like you,” Dream says through a laugh, and George smiles despite his nerves.

“I’m glad, she’s honestly a delight to have here.” They pause for a second to watch the kids all trail inside the doorway, and then it shuts. George glances back at Dream, and is pleasantly surprised to find Dream already looking at him. “I’ve never seen you drop off Katarina, but it makes sense now.”

“Oh, how so?” Dream tilts his head, something George immediately finds endearing.

George motions at the ambulance, sucked into a little world of himself and Dream and the thing behind him. “Well, you obviously have a busy schedule. You can’t be expected to work on the same clock as a daycare, not when people are unpredictable with their accidents. It’s an *accident* for a reason.”

Maybe he’s rambling, he does that a lot. Maybe he’s saying all the right things, because Dream is still smiling at him and hasn’t really looked away since.

“Anyways,” George coughs, “I’m George. George Davidson. It’s nice to actually meet you.”

He offers a hand and Dream takes it. George realizes that isn’t not only Katarina’s hands that are swallowed by the grip, but his own too. Dream’s hands are warm.

“I’m Clay Bloque, but I go by Dream. I’ve heard a lot about you, it’s good to finally meet you in person.” They drop their hands and George’s immediately feels cold; he tucks it in the pocket of his cardigan. Dream hooks his thumb on his belt and George definitely doesn’t glance down, no way. “Rina really likes you, she enjoys coming here now because of you. Thank you for that, I know she can be difficult sometimes.”

“Oh, not at all!” George waves his free hand and laughs softly. “She’s been good, really. I haven’t had an issue with her the entire time.”

“Really?” Dream looks over at the daycare building and his eyes soften. “That’s good. I was worried because she’s normally around someone familiar all the time, like Mom or Celiel. I’m not the most reliable, because, well—” Dream shrugs his shoulder at the ambulance and George nods, understanding. “I’m just happy she’s not raising hell in there. She is my kid, after all.”

George chuckles and nods, watching as the lights to the ambulance shut off. He doesn’t know where Puffy is, but thinks she may have headed back into the building with Karl.

“So, when you’re busy it’s usually your wife that picks her up, right?”

“My what?” Dream repeats, and then scratches the back of his neck. “Do you mean Celiel? She’s not my wife, uh, we aren’t together.”

“Oh. Oh! I’m sorry!” George backtracks, and Dream laughs good-naturedly.

“Don’t worry about it, it’s alright. We have shared custody of Rina,” Dream leans against the ambulance. “Rina goes there or to Mom’s when I’m on call, and then is with me the rest of the time. Like today.”

George nods and they fall into a comfortable silence. Dream stifles a yawn, and a smile is shared.

“So, are you working today? Puffy didn’t say.”

“Heh, no we aren’t.” Dream looks to the side like he’s going to find his partner, but Sapnap must be sitting and waiting inside the cab. “We got the day sectioned off to come help with this, but it wasn’t in our rotation anyways. I guess I could say thanks for a guaranteed day off?”

George laughs at that, and pushes his hands deeper into his pockets. It isn’t *cold* outside, but the wind has picked up and he doesn’t know how Dream is only in a short sleeved uniform. “I would say you’re welcome, but I didn’t think you would want to spend your afternoon talking and teaching little kids.”

“I enjoyed it.” Dream scratches the back of his neck, his grin turning shy. “They’re eager to learn, and I have things I can teach, so why not? Thanks for inviting us out here.”

“Oh, well, Puffy did most of it,” George deflects, but Dream shakes his head.

“She told me it was your idea. I think you should take the credit, it was a good one.” Dream licks his lips and something like *nervousness* crosses his face.

“It means I finally got to meet the pretty teacher my daughter adores.”

George closes his mouth, something warm curling in his chest and spreading out. He huffs out a laugh, pushes his glasses up his nose and looks at Dream through them.

“Are those her words or yours?”

Dream shrugs, that nervous look sliding away to be replaced with easy confidence. It looks good on him. “Usually it’s her, but now I know she’s right. Rina has a good eye.”

George shuffles a scant inch closer; if Dream noticed he didn’t say anything, but his hand lands on his hip and widens the space in front of his chest, creating almost a spot for George to slip into. If he wasn’t at work or in *public*, maybe he would accept it. “Does she also get that from her father?”

Dream’s eyes shine with suppressed laughter and what George wants to call pure interest. Puppy curiosity. Adoration. “Perhaps. Maybe we just like pretty things—“

The siren blips. Dream stiffens and George yelps, unused to the sound like the paramedic is. They both look over to the driver’s end and George sees the raised and smug brows of Dream’s partner in the side mirror.

Dream sighs and then laughs, a little tight but George can tell it isn’t aimed at him. They share a smile, and then Dream is reaching out his hand again. George takes it, but this time the shake is softer and Dream’s fingers run under his palm.

George inhales, sharp but not harsh, and Dream's eyes drop and dart back up.

"I'll see you later, George. Pick-up is at four, right?"

George searches for anything, words, a sentence. "Y-yeah, four. I'll see you then."

Nice going.

"Four," Dream repeats, brows pulling together like he's going to say something more but the siren chirps again, interrupting anything that may have come from him. The blond glances at the side mirror with a dirty glare, but it immediately softens when he turns back to George. "See you then."

George walks back to the building in a daze, half in awe of the conversation and half at his own ability to keep it going. Sure, he's good at chatting and keeping up with parents, but just from that little exchange it seems like Dream isn't just another guardian to deal with.

Karl gives him a grin and raised brows, but George shoots his own look at Karl's phone, currently lit up with texts from a new number. The workers share guilty looks, each of them having fallen victim to the stupid charms of paramedics, but it's not like it's a bad thing.

Snack time goes flawlessly, and George finds himself playing simple games of Telephone and Shout Out as time passes easily. The afternoons either move quickly or drag on, and he's glad his desire to see Dream again isn't pulling at the minutes. Karl helps, and together they work and get the kids through games and drawing, a quick game of musical chairs in the middle of the room, and then it's basically time for them to leave.

George waits in the classroom and when a certain blond knocks at the door frame, he isn't the only one without a hot paramedic's number.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

“You’re alright with that, right?”

“Hm? With what?” George doesn’t know what he’s referring to. He hasn’t gotten any red flags from Dream whatsoever — except maybe that he dogears his books, what a terrible habit — and is super confused as to what he’s asking.

“With Katarina. Us. Me having a daughter.”

Chapter Notes

hello hello:)

enjoy this early update, it’s super cute lmao and i felt like putting it out:3

George yawns, eyes watering behind his lenses. He isn’t exactly tired, but it’s that bone deep weariness that comes with the end of the week and the onslaught of adult responsibilities. The desire to crawl into bed and ignore his empty fridge and full laundry basket is great, and the attitude of the kids is *not* helping.

Dream has been nice though. They’ve been texting, maybe a bit (read: a *lot*) more than a typical conversation with a parent he knows. George likes it, though; Dream sends him texts through the day and George replies when he takes quick five minute breaks, switching with Karl so they have a chance to breathe themselves.

George learns more about the blond in the few days after the paramedics visit. He discovers Dream likes video games and cats, and confirms that Patches is as cute as Katarina described; he can cook for the most part and isn’t half bad at chess, and that Katarina wasn’t planned but Dream wouldn’t change anything for the world.

They get closer.

They make plans to meet up over the weekend.

As much as George loves the kids and adores being around them, he really just wants to go home so he can sleep and then Saturday at 11am at the little coffee shop on the corner will come way quicker.

Childcare isn’t easy. George knew this going into it, knew that kids are unpredictable among many things and that days aren’t all sunshine and daisies. Children don’t have plans like adults do, and while most of the time it’s alright, their moods can change at the drop of a hat. It just kind of sucks when he’s the only one here to deal with it.

Wyatt is back, and Wyatt is making it known that he's here. He's spent the better half of the morning snatching small things from Adam, pushing his buttons and creating more of a problem through his actions than words. The kid is also infringing on Katarina's space, edging the girl out of the little reading nook she's found.

To be quite frank, George is annoyed with the kid.

He's talked to him, told him that this kind of behaviour isn't acceptable but Wyatt doesn't think the rules apply to him. He would be very wrong, because this isn't only a place for him, but for other kid's and *now* he's putting them in danger.

George leans back in his chair, stretching his arms over his head from where he was reading over documents about updating the building. Katarina is off on her own, fiddling with the little toy George taught her to solve. Adam is playing in the sand, talking quietly to Laura and building little structures. He glances back at his computer screen—

“Wyatt! You can't—”

“What? I'm not doing anything!”

George snaps his gaze over, dread welling in his gut.

“You are! That—you—!”

Katarina is standing, her toy thrown on the floor and abandoned. Wyatt is kneeling in the place she was sitting, a book tucked under his arms to free up his hands, and he's looking up at her with a poorly hidden grin.

“What?” Wyatt asks— *taunts* , and George scowls. Adam and Laura are quiet as mice at the table now, simply watching with wide eyes. “I just wanted to sit down, Ree, what's wrong with that?”

Katarina scowls, fierce and golden behind her glasses. “Don't *call* me that, please, I don't like it.” Maybe her tone isn't the nicest, but George has heard the girl tell this kid that numerous times since he's arrived. Wyatt doesn't seem to get the point. “If you wanted to sit I could have moved—”

“I don't want to sit with you,” Wyatt snaps back, and that's the final straw. They aren't going to sort this out, not independently, so George stands up from his chair and straightens his sweater out. They aren't going anywhere, and he's sure Wyatt saw him get up. It's not an intimidation factor, but simply George's presence should be enough for the kid to know when he's in the wrong.

Apparently, Wyatt is in the mood to fight today.

“You're just a stupid little—”

“Wyatt!” George says, sharp and stern. The kid freezes and looks over, and George sees the way Rina swipes at her eye under her glass lense. The brunet folds his arms over his chest and stares at the kid, who quickly slips the book into his hand to make himself look busy.

There's a moment of silence, and then Wyatt is dropping his little act of reading.

“Mister George, i just—”

“Wyatt,” George gently inteterups, “I don't want to hear what you were *doing* , I want to hear what you wanted to *do*. First, though, I'm going to talk to Katarina. Please give me your book.”

Wyatt looks at him with a sneer and for a second George thinks he's going to refuse, but George holds out his hand and the book smacks in the middle of his palm. It stings and his annoyance rises, but George keeps his face steady and motions at the side of the room, at a table away from the others.

"Can you wait for me over there, please?" George doesn't look at the table, but Wyatt does and nods slowly. The kid is scowling deeply now, and George is glad this isn't a terrible situation. He still doesn't want to deal with it, though. "Take the jar there and mix it up. When it's all settled, then I'll come over and talk. You can decide when that is, but we will be chatting before you go home, alright?"

The kid doesn't answer, but stomps over to the table and grabs the jar. George watches as he shakes it, simply a mason jar filled with lots of glitter and random knick knacks, things that take a few minutes to settle. It's so easy, but it does help the kids take the time to calm down without George right there.

Now.

George crouches down in front of Katarina, who has taken her glasses off and is smearing her palm over her wet eyes. He offers a softer look, not a smile but just comfort for now. "Rina, can you tell me what happened? I'm going to talk to Wyatt after, but I want you to explain it to me the way you saw it."

"H-he said he wanted to sit where I was," Katarina snuffles, voice wobbling as she presumably holds back more tears, "So-so I said he could sit *with* me but he didn't want to. Then he sat down and pushed me up and called me—"

Rina cuts herself off and George watches her shut her eyes, inhale softly but shakily, and then exhale just as smoothly. She does it again. George waits.

"He wanted to sit but not with me and then he pushed me. I don't think I did anything wrong, but I don't know," comes out in a smaller voice, and George nods slowly.

"Alright. Are you okay? Nothing hurting?" Katarina shakes her head, and George smiles softly. "Good. Would you like to go play with Laura and Adam or do you want to sit by my desk and wait until home?"

Katarina's eyes flick towards the two standing behind the sand table, having long lost interest in the fight and returning to their little builds. George doesn't urge her anywhere, but instead steps back and puts a gentle hand on her shoulder.

"I'll be back at my desk in a minute, and it's almost home time. Dad is picking you up today, right?"

George already knows the answer. Dream was excited to see him again, and had mentioned that in the text at lunch. Really, George had been looking forward to the end of day for that specific reason and now this situation triples it.

The blonde nods again, and George leaves her there with an easy decision. He sighs lowly and steels himself for a fun conversation.

He peeks up at the jar sitting on the table, noticing the way it swirls and settles slowly. Wyatt is glaring intently at it, like his gaze alone would make the glitter fall to the bottom faster and George simply walks past the table and towards the classroom door, peeking out and seeing the first parent

waiting on the row of chairs. Laura's mom is always early, but she plays Candy Crush and has no problem waiting until pickup.

George laces his fingers behind his back and looks over at the three others in the classroom. It's nearing home time, *finally*, but he doesn't want to tell them to start getting ready lest Wyatt decides to stand up and leave himself.

George has had enough of the kids' attitude and they're going to have a chat whether he likes it or not.

It takes a few minutes but the jar settles. George easily moves towards the table, having been wandering to waste time and prepare himself for a conversation long coming. He sits down beside Wyatt — not across, never across for boys — and taps his fingers on the table.

"Can we talk a little bit Wyatt?"

The kid shrugs but doesn't give a verbal answer.

"Alright. I would like you to explain to me what the situation with Katarina was. You've been coming here for a while, and you know that kind of behaviour isn't allowed, which is why we need to talk about it." George laces his fingers, not really looking at Wyatt but also not staring him down. "I have time. I might need to leave to get the rest of the kids ready, but you can speak whenever you want. We also might need to talk to your mom."

Wyatt stays silent, rubbing his thumb into the table. George waits, glances around at the three others here and sees that they're quietly cleaning up already. That's fine—

"I wanted to sit," Wyatt mutters, "She wouldn't let me."

"Could you have sat with her?"

Wyatt shrugs.

"Guess so."

George hums his acknowledgement and Wyatt slides down in his chair. "What else happened?"

"I called her names."

"And?"

"And I know she doesn't like that..." Wyatt finishes, and George can hear the tinges of regret seeping in. The problem is he doesn't know if the regret is from Wyatt feeling bad over doing those things to Rina, or if it's him feeling sorry for himself. "I feel bad."

"If you feel bad, then why do you keep doing these things?" George asks him, turning now to face the boy. Wyatt doesn't look at him. "This needs to stop, Wyatt. I realize that you are trying but this isn't the first time this has happened, and I won't allow it in my building."

George's tone is soft but strict, and Wyatt sinks further.

"It's Friday. I'm going to send you home just like every other day, and then I'm going to have a talk with your mom. You're going to be a part of it because it's about you, and we're going to decide how we go on from here. Is there anything you don't understand?"

Wyatt blinks rapidly. "A-are you kicking me out?"

George's heart squeezes and he swallows. "I don't want to, Wyatt, but I can't have this kind of behaviour here. It's not only a safe place for you, but for everyone else and I need to do my job. This is an important conversation, and nothing is going to happen until we get Mom in on this, okay?"

Wyatt snuffles, and then nods slowly. George doesn't offer a smile, not that fake kind of comfort when the kid is evidently upset, and tells him in a quiet voice to go get ready for home. Then, he stands and moves over to the coat racks to help Laura do up her zipper.

He doesn't like those conversations. George hates giving kids the serious talk, and he absolutely does not want to have to kick a kid from his daycare. However, he can't do anything if the child won't change their behavior; he has a responsibility to protect all the children here, and he can't do that if there's a kid causing disruptions like that.

The next few minutes go smoothly. George gets runners changed and bags packed, things cleaned up and has a quick word with Wyatt's mom when she comes into the building. He plans to call her later, this weekend when the kids are home and he's spending only a few hours at the daycare.

George waves goodbye to Adam, smiles at Laura as she yells out her farewell, and then turns—

"Now, Miss Rina. Where is your lovely father?"

The girl giggles, and George shakes his head with a laugh. Dream had a feeling he was going to be late today and even though George has had a long one, he doesn't mind staying especially if it's for this little angel.

Her father isn't so bad, either.

George comes back into the room, leaves the door open behind him because he isn't expecting anyone but Dream, and takes a seat in the small chairs once again. Katarina is flipping through another book, her backpack hooked over her small shoulders and runners changed out for outdoor shoes.

She keeps pushing her glasses up her nose. George feels something fond rise in his chest, and he adjusts the temple on his own.

"Katarina, are your glasses dirty? I know mine get all smudgy when I keep moving them around." The girl looks up, blinks with wide eyes and then slowly nods. George stands from his seat, ankles aching from his long week and his shoulders stiff. "Would you like me to clean them?"

"With your shirt?" Katarina's eyes seem to pick apart his entire outfit—something simple today, a plain navy cardigan and pale slacks. "It doesn't look very soft."

George laughs at that, and moves over to his desk to grab eyeglass spray and a tissue. "Does your dad like to clean your glasses on his shirts then?"

"Yeah, but he's not very good at it cuz' he doesn't wear glasses."

The brunet holds his hand out and her glasses are set there. Katarina blinks at the sudden visual change, and George hums absently as he sprays and cleans off her lenses. They were pretty dirty, smudged with fingerprints and God knows what else. He makes a mental note to check in and clean them more often, lest they get scratched.

"So what are you up to this weekend?" George asks.

“Mm, I think I’m going to Grandma’s tomorrow. Dad has big boy plans, he said.”

“Oh?” George’s cheeks warm, and he holds up the girl’s glasses to the lights before going back in and cleaning them off more. “Does he now?”

“Mhm, he said it was a secret, but he would tell me later maybe.” Katarina accepts her glasses back with a smile, and puts them on her nose. “Woah, it’s so easy!”

“Good!” George sets the spray down, and then narrows his own eyes through his lenses. “My turn... did you want to try?”

Katarina peeks over with nervous eyes. “Try... cleaning your glasses?”

“Sure, why not?” George slips them off and motions with an empty hand. The girl holds his wire frames with careful fingers, like they’re so breakable the smallest amount of pressure would snap them. It’s truly endearing, the care at which Katarina handles them. “Spray once on each lense, and then carefully wipe it off like you’re cleaning a small window.”

Katarina reaches for the spray, but her fingers freeze midair. “What if I break them?”

George nudges the bottle closer, a little off because he can’t really see the edges but he still makes it. “Then I go get my second pair from my bag, and we move on. You don’t need to if you don’t feel comfortable, but I’d rather you practice on a pair we can easily replace.”

“Okay...” Katarina takes the spray and follows George’s instructions, face pinched in concentration and the tip of her tongue poking out as she rubs at the glasses with the tissue. Really, they weren’t that dirty to begin with, but George was telling the truth over the importance of them; he’d rather Rina break his and have a replacement, seeing as she only has the one.

“What about this part here?” Katarina points at the nose pieces, and George shrugs.

“Some people clean them, some don’t. I usually clean them everytime, but you can.”

“Mm...” Katarina carefully moves the glasses to her other hand and George watches with an amused but fond brow as she pokes at the little plastic pieces. “Why don’t mine have these?”

George leans his elbow on the table and sets his head in his hand. “Maybe because you have kids glasses, and mine are adult ones. When you get a little older, perhaps then you can get similar ones.”

Katarina offers the glasses back, and George puts them on so he can see a shy but genuine smile. Her eyes are lit up and bright and there’s a curl already stuck in the hinge of her glasses, but she looks so happy.

“We can match!”

George grins, his heart full with adoration. “We can match.”

There’s a knock at the door, and both George and Katarina turn to look.

Dream is standing there, dressed more casually in a large blue hoodie and what looks to be black work pants, fit with pockets and buckles. George meets his eye and Dream smiles, his gaze dropping to give him a quick once over before Katarina is bowling into his legs.

“Dad! Mister George let me clean his glasses!”

The blond looks down at his daughter before he picks her up, popping her on his hip like a four year old child isn't actually pretty heavy. She giggles as he nuzzles into her cheek, and George watches as the other flicks a stray curl. Dream's eyes find him again, and George feels so, so warm. "Did he now? Aren't you lucky!"

Katarina grins something wide, and George finally breaks himself out of his little daze and stands up so he can get closer to the man plaguing his thoughts this week. Katarina looks between him and her father, and George leans his weight on one leg.

His fingers itch to reach out, wants to see if the curls Katarina inherited are soft because Dream's hair is soft, or if the laundry detergent scent is shared between both of them.

"We had a good day today. There was a bit of a problem towards the end, but it wasn't on Rina's end. I'll sort it out and give you an update," George's voice goes soft, less like he's talking to a parent and more like he's talking to a lover. The blonde child nods at his words, a serious face now and Dream frowns softly. He doesn't look angry, just concerned, and George adjusts his glasses delicately. "Everyone is okay, though. I've got it handled."

"Mister George is good at that," Rina whispers to her father, except children really only have one volume and it's *loud* so of course George hears it; Dream nods again, but this time it's a more mock seriousness and it pushes a grin back onto their faces.

"I believe you, Mister George is pretty capable." Dream bounces his daughter and she yelps, but it's tinged with a giggle and Dream takes the chance to capture all of George's attention again. "Well, we're taking up all of his time. He's off now, right?"

George nods, and Dream's free hand twitches like he's going to reach out. The other wishes he would, but he's got a kid in one arm and a workplace surrounding the other.

Tomorrow, George tells himself. *Tomorrow*.

"Bye, Mister George! See you on—Monday, right, Dad?"

"That's right, duckling. Monday." Dream's got a glint in his eye and George decides right there he loves it, even if it means the pair are walking away and Katarina is waving over her father's broad shoulder. George hears them speak a bit as they exit, about her day and Dream's day—

George closes the classroom door and sinks against it, the exhaustion of the week suddenly piling into him. He does feel a little light, though, and he wonders if the promise of Dream's visit was able to lift his spirits just enough to get him through talking to Wyatt, Wyatt's mother, and then just the entire week.

"God, I'm so..." he trails off, speaking to an empty classroom. His day isn't even done yet; George still has to clean up and sort some things out for Monday, especially since he's taking the weekend off and Karl is coming in alone.

(Usually, George comes in for two or three hours on Saturday to organize his things. There isn't any real reason for him to, but sleeping in the extra half hour on Monday's is a blessing.)

George takes less time to clean up, doing everything quickly so he can go home and feed his cat, and then figure out what the hell he's going to wear tomorrow. Dream just said casual, but George's entire wardrobe ranges from his job as a daycare teacher to a serious lazy day with sweatpants and shirts with holes.

Is he screwed? Maybe.

He's George. He's the reliable and capable daycare teacher. He can do this.

Can't he?

Dream texts him that morning and asks if he wants to meet in the park before heading to the cafe, and George is just sticky-rolling the cat hairs off his silken shirt when he answers the text with an affirmative.

If he thought he was nervous yesterday, it doesn't measure up nearly to his emotions today.

George woke up nervous and stayed jittery all morning, hardly got through feeding his cat and showering, and then completely regretted the outfit he chose last night before changing it for a completely different one. He texted Dream and told him he usually dresses up a bit more, and Dream just responded with a *wear whatever makes you feel comfortable:*) and some of his panic was soothed.

He sighs and puts down the lint roller. He's dressed in a white silk turtleneck, with flowing sleeves and the bottom tucked into cinched black pants. It's colder today, and George knows that at least in this he won't be chilled.

Cat looks up at him from the floor, and George offers her a small smile. He crouches to scratch her under the chin, careful not to get more hair on him.

(She's a light coloured cat. It's inevitable.)

"I'll see you later, baby, I'm going out. Be good while I'm gone, alright?"

The feline doesn't answer, but George feels more reassured leaving after somewhat of a farewell. At least now he has something to go back home to if the date goes badly, but George doesn't think it'll turn out that way.

He checks his bag for his phone and wallet, locks his little apartment flat and then makes his way down towards the park nearby. George likes the town for this reason; it's not small but also not a massive city, and he can easily get around without a car. It makes for harder days when it rains or the busses are down, but he manages.

The weather is nice, cloudy and light, and George feels more and more confident as the park nears. He doesn't know what Dream is wearing, but it won't be hard to miss a tall and attractive blond around here.

People mill around the park area and George earns some side glances for his outfit. Cons of living in a smaller city: people are less appreciative of ignoring gender roles.

He doesn't pay them any mind. George is here for one thing, and while he is a little worried about Dream's reaction to him and what he's wearing, Dream was the one to ask him out. He's seen what George wears in a regular day, it shouldn't be too—

"George?"

The brunet turns on the sidewalk, pulling himself out of his thoughts at the mention of his name. He blinks, and then smiles.

“Dream. Hi.”

The blond cleans up nice, and he looks even better when George sees appreciation and something *darker* in his gaze when it travels over George. Dream is wearing a simple white button up, one that perfects George’s attire like they had planned it. The top few buttons are undone, and his hand is tucked into the front pocket of his slacks. Dream grins at him, standing only a few feet away, and then extends his hand.

“Hi, pretty boy. Ready to go?”

George’s jaw drops on a soft smile, and he laughs as he takes Dream’s hand. They’re big, and his own fingers slip right into them like they’ve practiced. Not even that; it feels like they were made to be together. “Such a charmer, honestly. You look good, Dream, sorry about—”

“Don’t even start, George,” Dream interrupts, not unkindly but with a sly expression. “If it means I get to match with you and not wear a blue jumpsuit, then I’ll get ready any day.”

They pause, and then share a soft laugh. Dream tugs George along by his hand, and they finish their little walk through the park. George asks about Katarina, because how could he not, and Dream tells him that the little girl was *very* curious as to where he was going.

“I’ll have to remind myself to grill her when she gets older,” Dream says, and they round the corner onto the busier street. The blond nudges George over to the inside, and walks closer to the rushing cars. George squeezes his fingers lightly. “She’s definitely a suspicious one, that’s for sure.”

“And Puffy was alright with taking her today?” George looks sideways at Dream, who evidently feels the gaze on him and meets George’s eye. “I would feel bad if she was busy or we took a rare day off.”

Dream shrugs. “Mom adores her, and Rina feels the same way. I did make sure she didn’t have anything big going on, don’t worry. I’m a responsible dad.”

The little cafe gets closer, and George’s steps feel light and gleeful. “I don’t doubt that. Katarina adores you.”

The conversation stops as they get inside and settle; Dream tells George to choose a seat and he goes for a booth by the window, one where they can watch people and get the last glimpses of sunlight available. George sits down and Dream sits across from him, and the little drinks menu on the corner is pulled between them. They can pick what they want and then go up to order, without clogging the line too much with indecisiveness.

“Oh, that looks good,” Dream murmurs, and points at one of the options for green tea. George leans closer over the table, and hums as he pokes the little menu under Dream’s fingers.

“Do we want to get something to eat as well? I haven’t tried the pastries here.”

“Sure, you choose whatever you want. I’m not picky.” Dream keeps his hand on the table, and George watches him tap the tip of his own pale finger. The little teasing touch blooms warmth throughout his body, just a simple affectionate and easy gesture that has George falling, plummeting to the earth in a storm of *Dream*.

“What if I get this...”

They pick their drinks and food, and Dream stands up to go order. George protests, seeing as it's their first date and he can pay for himself, but Dream tells him that if he lets him pay this time, George can get the next date.

That shuts him up real quick, and George leans on the table as Dream walks away. Already, he's having an amazing time and he wonders if it's attributed to the tall man speaking to the worker behind the counter. Dream has a calming aura, a comfortable and easy one that allows George to slip into a simple pattern of push and pull.

The compliments coming from him aren't bad either. George didn't realize he liked being called *pretty* until there was someone that he knew wouldn't lie to him.

So far, he's having an amazing time.

Dream slides back into the booth and tosses his wallet on the seat. “They said it would be a few minutes, but they know where we're sitting. Table service is nice, I didn't know they did that here.”

“Hm, maybe it's new,” George replies, and sets his chin on his laced fingers. He studies Dream again, takes in the freckles on his cheeks and his golden eyes. Oh. “You have green eyes, don't you?”

Dream blinks and tilts his head curiously. “I do, why?”

“Just a thought. I'm colorblind, so they look more yellow to me.” George chuckles as understanding dawns on Dream's face, and then motions vaguely. “I can see blue very well, though. It's my favorite color.”

The blond's brow quirks. “Noted. Does that mean you can't see red either?”

“That's right. It makes for a fun time when buying paint for work.” Dream snorts at that and George feels a strike of pride and glee at making the other laugh. “The kids understand, though, and they help a lot.”

Dream hums and reaches his arms out over the table, not quite intruding George's space but almost asking if he could. George slides his elbows a little farther in, and Dream rubs the silk of his shirt between his pointer and thumb. His gaze is soft. “So you enjoy your job?”

George nods, “I do. I didn't realize it was where I was going to end up, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. I've met a lot of nice people since I've started, and the kids aren't so bad as well.”

They're stopped when their food and drinks are dropped off, and George sips at the matcha latte Dream bought him. It's good, sweet and hot on his tongue and laced with caramel, and he makes an appreciative face when he sets the cup down. Dream licks at the whip on the top of his own drink — something with coffee, George thinks — and the brunet grins as Dream evidently deems it as good.

The last thing was a piece of cheesecake, potentially strawberry, and George leaves it for now.

“And you?” He asks, raising his cup again, “I realize it's a harder question, but do you enjoy what you do?”

Dream purses his lips in thought, and then shrugs lightly. “I think I do. I know that it's a needed job

and it's important. I like to think I'm good at what I do and I'm good because I enjoy it. I'm a people person, and if it means I can help by saving them then that's what I'll do."

George nods, and there's a moment of comfortable silence as they both sip their drinks; Dream's looks good, and George eyes it with curiosity. Dream notices, and holds it out. "Would you like to try? It's kind of plain, but it's still good."

"I mean..." George hesitates, but Dream just slides the cup over the table and turns the handle towards George. "Alright, you've convinced me."

Dream was right; it's a little simple, but sweetened with caramel undertones and a rich coffee flavor he can't say that it's bad. George licks his lip as he lowers the drink, and Dream's eyes catch on his mouth.

"Oh, you've got..."

Dream's fingers twitch. George wants him to reach out.

He does.

"Hold still," Dream mumbles, and leans across the table to gently wipe his thumb at the corner of George's lip; it's soft and Dream's eyes never leave his face, tongue poked out in concentration just like his daughter. George's fingers tighten around the cup, heat flooding him from the inside out and it only gets worse when Dream leans back and licks the whip off the tip of his finger. "Got it... tastes good, and the whipping cream isn't half bad."

George inhales softly, and then licks his lip again like he could taste the remnants of Dream there. He knows his cheeks are red, and the way Dream is sitting there with a self satisfied grin is not helping. It's stupidly hot, and George runs a hand through his hair to calm his nerves.

"You're such an idiot, oh my God."

"What?" Dream laughs, and takes back his offered drink. "I would try yours but I know I don't like matcha. Too bland."

"And your drink isn't?"

"Excuse you," Dream sniffs, "It tastes like caramel. That's better than whatever grass blend you're drinking."

George snorts. "Grass blend? God, we're going to have to work on that. Can't have uncultured paramedics running around, wreaking havoc."

"Pfft, whatever. You can tell that to Sapnap, he's just as bad as me." Dream picks up one of the forks on the plate and pokes at the edge of the cheese cake. "Actually, he's been talking to your coworker lately. Karl?"

George raises a brow. There's matching mischief on Dream's face, and George realizes he's just as in on the communication between their coworkers as George is. "Oh, is that so? I hope it's going well for them, Karl is definitely a good guy."

"I think it is." Dream eats a piece of the cheesecake and George watches his brow scrunch at the sweetness. "Sapnap is the same way, he deserves someone who will treat him well. He's newer here, just started at the beginning of this year. He's good at what he does, but the nature of it gets to you sometimes."

George frowns softly at that and finishes the last of his latte. “That’s understandable. I’m happy that they’re getting along, I know what stress can do to a person.”

Dream makes a sound of agreement and George takes the offered fork. “God, this is sweet, I don’t know if I’ll finish it.”

“Well,” George says, and pops a mouthful of his own in. It *is* sweet, but not unbearable. He smiles something soft and sly at Dream, who peers at him curiously. “Now we know not to get it again.”

The blond laughs and George feels him tangle their fingers on the table. He squeezes gently and Dream squeezes back.

“Now we know.”

They talk about mundane things, avoiding severe topics or morbid ideas. George tells him that he usually is pretty busy, even on the weekends, and Dream tells him he’s one of the on-call paramedics when the others aren’t available. They laugh about little things that have happened in their lives and George gets to see the baby pictures of Katarina that Dream has on his phone.

“God, she’s so cute,” George murmurs, and swipes to another picture of her and Dream eating ice cream. Katarina is smiling at the camera, gummy and wide, and Dream is looking down at his daughter with the most fond expression George has seen.

He gives the phone back. Their drinks are long gone and really, they’re just taking up space but George doesn’t want to leave. “I know you said that you and her mother aren’t together... you have shared custody, right?”

“Uh, kinda.” Dream scratches the back of his neck, his shirt sleeves rolled up now to expose strong forearms. “Celiel gets her every second weekend and picks her up on the days I can’t or Mom can’t. It’s a long story and not a fun one, but really Celiel told me at the start she didn’t want much to do with Katarina. We were young and stupid and I told her I would support her through anything, and now here we are with a kid.”

“I don’t regret a single thing,” Dream continues, “I could tell she didn’t have big emotions over having a kid and besides, she had a plan and life she wanted to pursue. Really, I have full custody of Rina but I wanted her to at least have a mother figure in her life, so she visits sometimes. Celiel is alright with it, but it’s only sometimes because her house isn’t exactly child-proof.”

George nods, and Dream plays with his fingers absently. The size difference lights something pleasant in George’s brain, and he doesn’t pull his hand away.

“That must get stressful sometimes. When you’re out on call.”

“A bit,” Dream answers truthfully, “Mom is super good about coming in and our neighbor is a sweet lady who has a worse sleep schedule than I do. We make it work, and while Rina understands I can’t be home all the time, I still worry about it.”

“She’s a good kid.” George taps Dream’s knuckles with his fingertips. “I think she would let you know if she was having issues with it, Rina has a good grasp on these kinds of things.”

Dream huffs out a breath of laughter, and then his hands stiffen in George’s hold. The brunet looks up at him, and sees a more nervous and withheld expression on his face. It’s strange, seeing as they’ve been talking for the last two hours with no real discomfort. George frowns, and rubs a circle into Dream’s palm.

“You’re alright with that, right?”

“Hm? With what?” George doesn’t know what he’s referring to. He hasn’t gotten any red flags from Dream whatsoever — except maybe that he dogears his books, what a terrible habit — and is super confused as to what he’s asking.

“With Katarina. Us. Me having a daughter.”

“Oh.” George blinks, sees the desperately worried look on Dream’s face.

“I just mean I *really* like where this is going and I really like you—” Dream stutters, and George waits for him, “—and i just want you to know that Rina isn’t going away? Like she’s my responsibility and I don’t want you to get involved with me— *us* , if that isn’t something you can handle.”

Dream stops and his lips press into a tight line. George gazes at him; his words are stuttered but seem practised and overused, and just in that split second George wonders how many people have turned Dream down or away because of his wonderful, precious little girl.

“Dream.”

“Mhm?”

George lifts their hands and leans his chin on their intertwined fingers. “I adore Katarina. You don’t need to worry about that with me, I totally understand. She’s your daughter and I still want to work on this—” George motions between them with his free hand, “—and I know she’s part of it. I’m actually excited about that, really, she’s an amazing kid, Dream.”

His sentence ends with a laugh, and Dream’s eyes flick between his own. He must see something he trusts, because Dream relaxes with a soft sigh and smile.

“Good. Good, I’m glad.”

George lowers their hands and Dream continues to fiddle with them. The conversation picks up again, and then it’s getting to the point where Dream needs to go get his daughter from Puffy’s. They stand and leave, and Dream puts a large palm on George’s lower back as they walk back towards the park.

“Let me walk you home?” Dream looks so hopeful and willing, and George accepts without a second thought. They don’t talk as much now, just stay and enjoy each other’s company with some small comments here and there. George slides his hand into Dream’s, and the other laces their fingers without a second of hesitancy.

The clouds ended up sticking around, but George thinks that the day is bright enough even with them.

They get to George’s building, and Dream licks his lips. He looks down at George and they smile, and George sets a hand on the outside door.

He tilts his head, heart in his throat. “Would you like to come in? You did say you would walk me home, and…”

Dream smiles at that, sharp and sleek and anything but dangerous. If George had to get specific, he’d say it was laced with a promise. “If you would like me to. I can stay for a few minutes longer, just to make sure you don’t trip on the stairs or anything.”

George laughs and they walk into the building, heading up the main staircase; he's all too aware of Dream right behind him, and his heart pounds in his chest as that hand comes up and brushes over his back again.

"Good thing I have a trusty paramedic with me. What would I do without you?"

"Mm, probably, like, slip and fall on these stairs you take every single day." They reach George's floor and his door, but he doesn't reach in his bag for his keys just yet. Dream moves a little closer, and George can feel the door at his back; Dream is just staring at him, eyes soft and maybe a little dark. His voice matches. "Thank you for coming out with me. I really enjoyed it."

"Me too," George murmurs, and reaches out to tug at the buttoned seam of Dream's shirt. "I had fun, but I can definitely take care of paying for next time."

Dream chuckles, and George tilts his chin up to face the other. He seems closer now, and George senses the small bit of hesitancy.

Can I?

"How about this, you pick the place next time and you can pay, and I'll make sure I have the entire day off so we don't have to cut it short," Dream says, quiet and low, and George shivers despite himself. He holds the white shirt a little tighter, and rocks up onto the balls of his feet.

The space between them is electrified, and George's lips part as Dream's hand lands high on his waist. His fingers splay over his ribcage, and George wonders if his heart can be felt through them.

Please.

"Works for me."

Dream's tongue wets his lower lip and just as his eyes lower, George closes his own.

He tastes like coffee and strawberries. George sighs against Dream's mouth and the other presses down, tilting his head as his hand comes up to hold George's own; George reaches up to set his other palm against Dream's cheek, and earns himself a small noise over his touch.

Kissing Dream is wonderful. He's soft edges and simple touches, and George finds himself quickly overwhelmed with everything Dream is: his smell, his grasp, how he feels under his own fingertips.

George inhales through his nose as they readjust, and their lips slide together with such simple ease George realizes he almost never wants to kiss anyone else ever again. Dream's free hand tucks further around his waist, holds the slim line of it and pulls him a little closer against his chest. They never part, not even as George nips teasingly at his bottom lip and Dream licks over the slight sting.

They finally pull away after what seems like only mere seconds, and George exhales softly against Dream's mouth. He blinks his eyes open, bleary as he pulls himself from the daze of the other and looks up to find Dream struggling just as much. George smiles, and Dream's grin tastes just as good as their shared drinks when he rocks back up to kiss him again.

"You need to go get Rina," George slurs against his lips, and Dream hums absently.

"She isn't going anywhere, pretty boy." Dream kisses him sweetly then, renders him useless under a soft touch and gentle words, "Let me have this right now, please?"

And how could George say no to that?

Dream leaves him with one last kiss and a squeeze to his hands, and George makes sure to steal a quick peck on the underside of Dream's jaw before he moves away. It's sad to see him walk down those stairs and even worse when George hears the door to the building open and shut, but he unlocks his apartment door with a giddy smile and pink lips.

His cat meows at him when he gets in, and George sinks against the door with a sigh he would almost call *lovestruck*. George looks down at her, and then reaches to stroke over her back. His other hand rubs at his forehead like he's a damsel, and George slides down until he hits the floor.

Heart crashing in his chest, lips swollen and thick and his tongue tingly with the last dredges of Dream, George tips his head back and drags his hand down. He traces his lips, wonders how anything could have felt so perfect as that.

Cat meows beside him and George laughs to himself.

"God, I was nervous for nothing. He's amazing, Cat. Just—... he's amazing. Oh my God, he's amazing."

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

George ducks his head as Dream's cups his cheek, wipes away the trail of wetness. He sniffs again, and his voice is wobbly when he speaks: "I want to go home."

"Okay. Okay, let's get you home." Dream stands slowly, and George refuses to let go of his hand. The blond tugs a little, and George manages to stand up. He wipes his face and grabs for his glasses, and Dream chews his lip. "I'll take you home, baby, c'mon."

Chapter Notes

a quick note before this chapter!

CW: children choking, CPR administration

this chapter is based off personal experience and is in no way an instruction booklet on how to properly perform CPR. if you're curious, take a course and learn from a trained professional. dont get your training from a dnf fanfic.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George looks out of the window. Of *course* it has to be raining today.

Maybe he should have known that the clouds from his and Dream's date on the weekend would last; it had been like this all week, starting from Saturday and stretching to today, an early Wednesday morning where the sky has decided to open up and just pour.

It wouldn't be a bad thing if Cat hadn't gotten at his umbrella a few days ago, and George could not for the *life* of him find his bus pass anywhere. The rain had started early and is showing no signs of letting up. He texted Karl to see if he could grab a ride but the other is out sick today, and George remembers Puffy saying that she'll be out of town for today and tomorrow.

Of fucking course.

"I don't know what to do," George moans, and presses the back of his hand to his forehead. He could, theoretically, walk through the rain if he wants to get totally soaked and start off his day like a drowned rat, or— "I don't even have anyone I could call. There aren't any taxis near here that will come quick enough."

He could make it. George can walk fast.

A sigh, and he looks down at the dark corduroy overalls and white shirt he's wearing, and then at the rain slicked window again. He really doesn't want to walk—

His phone buzzes on the counter, and George frowns. It's like seven in the morning, who would be texting him at this time?

He flips the phone over.

From: dream:]

morning:)

ru working today?

Despite his bad mood, George smiles at the little smiley face.

From: george

good morning:]

and yes, sadly, its super gross out and im dreading it

From: dream:]

at least your walk to the bus stop is close

less water n stuff

From: george

it would be if i could find my bus pass, ive looked everywhere for it

i think im gonna take the same umbrella cat decided was her enemy:[

From: dream:]

your cat ripped your umbrella? George ur gonna get soaked

He sighs, and texts Dream one handed as he pulls his shoes on.

From: george

ill make sure to send u pix of my fresh shower when i get to work lmao

From: dream:]

can you wait like

ten mins ill come and pick you up

He stops and sets his bag down to type quicker.

From: george

what no dream its alright, you dont need to

From: dream:]

already told rina to get her shoes on

sit tight beautiful:)

He smiles at his phone and shakes his head. Adoration wells up in his chest and George cannot believe— “This idiot...”

George waits. He looks out the window at the rain that doesn't stop and pets his cat who gets up at the same time as him, sometimes earlier. Some part of him wants to curse her for making Dream drive out and bring him to work, but the other bit is happy because this means he gets to see Dream again.

He's pretty sure Dream is on call today, isn't actually working but is available at the drop of a hat in case he's needed. George didn't know they did that, but Dream just hummed through their midnight phone call and said that it was a new thing, something in case they needed extra help.

“Think of it like firefighters,” Dream explains, and George tucks his knees to his chest on the couch. “We aren't actively working or moving people, but say there's a big accident somewhere or a lot of people are injured in the same location then they can call in support. I have an extra uniform in my car for that reason.”

“So does that mean they can call you at any time?”

“Yeah, pretty much.” Dream's phone end shuffles. “I've gotten calls in the middle of the night, four in the morning, the afternoon. They only call if I'm actually listed as on call that day, though, so I can at least expect it.”

George makes a soft sound. It's late, so late, but they've been talking for three hours since Katarina was put to bed and he doesn't want to say goodbye. The ghost of Dream's kiss was enough to tide him for the week and maybe until he saw him again, but his voice is addicting and George wants more. “That sounds stressful, waiting for a call that might never come.”

"Maybe. I'm used to it, though, so I don't mind." Dream is quiet for a second and then George hears him inhale. "It just makes for a hard time planning things. I feel bad when I have to leave and I don't want that to happen with us."

George smiles. Us.

"Remember what I told you on Saturday?"

"Yeah?"

"Dream, it's alright. Anything that happens with your job or mine, we can work through it." George's cheeks warm and he leans his chin on his knees. His voice lowers to a whisper, though he's alone in his home and Dream's daughter is sound asleep. "I'm here for as long as you want me. I want to see this through."

Dream laughs softly. "Me too. Sorry, I just get stressed about it."

"I don't blame you, it's not an easy thing for some people to deal with. Luckily, I'm pretty adaptable and if that doesn't tell you anything, I'm fucking stubborn." George grins wider at Dream's snort. "Seriously. You don't have to worry. We're alright."

"We're alright."

George is just getting nervous about Dream being late when his phone buzzes again. It's a simple *outside!* text and George races out the door, locks it and nearly trips over the stairs on his way down. He has half a mind to raise his jacket over his head and look around for the black vehicle Dream drives.

The air smells of water and wet concrete, and George breathes shallowly in his concentration. Water slicks through his flimsy cover and soaks his head, and he flinches as water runs down the back of his neck. Where is—

George turns his head, and sees the car. It's sitting close by, under a tree for a bit of coverage, and George nearly melts in relief as he reaches for the door handle.

The inside of the car is cool and dry, and the door slams behind George as he settles. Water drips off his hair and onto his lap, tickling his fingers as he exhales on a long, slow breath. The fan is running, a mix of cool and hot air so the inside of the car doesn't fog up, and George hears a soft chuckle from beside him.

"Good morning."

George turns his head and a drop of water flings off his hair. It falls on the console between the seats, but he's too busy staring at the soft smile Dream is giving him. The brunet feels his lips tug up. *"Hi."*

"Mister George!"

"Good morning, Katarina!" George exclaims, not missing a beat as he turns in his seat to look at the girl strapped into a large car seat. She looks fresh, her own curls damp from the rain, and seems absolutely mystified that George is sitting in the front seat right now. *"It's raining a lot, isn't it?"*

The girl blinks and nods. *"Are you and Dad friends?"*

George grins at that, and glances sideways to see the enamoured look the blond is giving him. He

looks good, George thinks, sitting in that same blue hoodie from before and looking for all his worth equally as overjoyed as his daughter.

“Yeah, we are. He didn’t want me to walk in the rain so here I am!” George feels a nudge on his elbow and glances over at Dream motioning to his seatbelt, so George pulls it over him and clicks it in before twisting in his seat again. “Are you alright with that? It’s super early still, you don’t have to be at the daycare for another hour-ish and I’m sure what I’m doing may bore you.”

Dream makes a soft noise, and George turns back around. “Well... I don’t have to be at work for another forty minutes. She’s coming with me wherever, and—what time do you absolutely need to be at Cap’s Care?”

“Uh, eight o’clock at the latest. People start dropping kids off right after that.”

“Do you have things set up?”

“Um.” George hesitates, but knows that the answer is positive because he always does that for the next day. “Yes? I just need to turn the lights on and probably get the mop ready, but that’s all, why?”

Dream smiles, and George watches him switch his blinker on. He’s driving with one hand, confident and comfortable behind a wheel and it’s immensely attractive. George meets his gaze with confusion, and Dream sets his free hand on the middle console, brushing George’s elbow.

“Would you like to come with us to get breakfast?”

Katarina coos with excitement, and George can’t help the surprised grin that crosses his face. “Mister George! Come get breakfast with us! You can’t go before breakfast.”

“We can’t exactly kick him out, duckling, it’s raining,” Dream laughs, and drums his fingers on the fabric between them. George shakes his head in amusement, but it’s all positive and he adores the shy glance Dream spares him. “So, what about it? Fast breakfast, courtesy of your favorite paramedic father?”

George snorts and settles in his seat. Like he has another favourite paramedic. He doesn’t pull his arm away from Dream’s fingers, and they creep onto his arm and tuck under his sleeve, just out of view of Katarina. They feel warm against George’s skin, and he hums happily.

“Sure. Take me for breakfast. Miss Rina, are you paying?”

“No way!” The girl exclaims, and George turns around with a mock shocked face.

“No? Then *who* is going to pay?”

“Dad is!” A small hand points to the drivers side and George lowers his hand enough by the gearshift so that Dream’s fingers can lace into his. Dream’s face radiates pure happiness. “Dad pays!”

George looks back over at Dream, who softly shakes his head and runs his thumb over George’s knuckles. The fan is still blowing air and he’s more dry now, but God is he ever warm. He does the same thing back, and Dream gently squeezes their hands as he peeks in the rearview mirror.

“Dad pays, always. Do you want orange juice or apple juice?”

“Apple!”

“George?” Dream’s voice is still gentle as he speaks to him, and George shrugs one shoulder.

“Apple works for me. Thank you, Dream.”

A flash of white teeth and a tongue that pokes over his lip. George inhales sharply, suddenly overcome with the *need want desire* to just... kiss him. He just wants to kiss Dream, feel him under his mouth and taste him again. Saturday feels like years ago and for once, George wishes he wasn’t around a child so that he could do just that.

Dream pulls into a little drive-thru and George’s hand feels cold when he pulls away to grab his wallet. They reattach when Rina busies herself with a hashbrown split into pieces and her apple juice, and George sips his own matching drink.

Not yet. Not yet, but maybe soon.

He doesn’t know how it happened. George thought they were watching the kids.

It wasn’t anything out of the norm; the sandtable is active, the books and pages are available, and someone brought out the Lego pieces. George sat on the carpet with Rina and Laura, reading with them and explaining some complicated words, and Karl was helping Wyatt with the massive puzzle they recently bought.

They were busy. Everyone was having a good time, and George didn’t feel as obligated to hover or nag. Maybe he should have.

Adam had coughed. George had looked up, but the kid cleared his throat and kept putting together pieces. He looked back towards Laura—

He coughed again, this time rougher and more wheezy.

George remembers frowning, a certain fear rising in his stomach. Dread, fear, and something cold, cold, cold. He was fine this morning. Adam doesn’t have asthma, and he didn’t come in coughing up a storm. It was... random. Odd. Bad.

He doesn’t know how he remembers anything next.

“Adam?” George says, already standing up from his spot. The kids’ face is red, turning more and more by the second, and George’s eyes go wide. “Adam, are you choking on something?”

There’s no reply. Adam’s eyes are bugged and his hands fly to his throat, and George just *acts*.

“Karl, move them to the hallway and call Puffy, she’s at the office. Tell her to come here, it’s an emergency.” George grabs Adam by the arm and crouches just behind him, bending the child’s chest over his forearm and raising the heel of his hand. Karl moves just as fast, and the door to the hallway is opening just as George brings his hand down on Adam’s back.

He does this four times more, and Adam wheezes out as soon as he stops. He didn’t spit anything out. Karl is in the hallway now, phone in hand and talking rapidly into it, all while blocking the door from worried and curious eyes: the kids want to know what’s happening.

“Adam, cough for me. Cough really hard.”

A small back jerks and Adam’s shoulders tense. A small sound escapes him but no real cough happens. A shuddery inhale does though, and George has a moment of relief before the inhale cuts off and Adam makes a strangled and choked noise.

Adam is choking. Adam’s choking—

George is just wrapping his hands around Adam’s abdomen when the child slumps over, and—

“Shit!” George catches him as he tips, a dead weight headed straight for the carpet floor they gathered on mere hours before. His voice is shaky as he shouts: “Karl! Call 911!”

George lets him fall, more controlled but fast as he arranges Adam on his back. He falls to his knees beside the child—the unconscious child, he’s unconscious now, and George gasps in a desperate breath for himself.

CPR. He has to run through the movements of CPR. George makes a sound, high pitched and panicked and confused and tries to get his fucking head together long enough to save this child.

Check the mouth. Look for something there.

He reaches for Adam’s jaw, pries it down and looks into his mouth. There’s nothing in it, nothing in his throat to suggest that he’s choking on something or even struggled to breathe. George blinks back tears and moves his head around a bit, but still doesn’t see a thing.

Do not put your fingers in unless you see something grabbable.

No fingers. He can’t see anything. If there is something there he could potentially push it down further. No fingers.

George really hopes Karl called 911. Children are more sensitive than adults, aren’t as developed and so, so vulnerable.

Assess if the child is breathing. If not, call 911 and perform CPR.

George lowers his head, puts his ear right beside Adam’s slack mouth and nose and listens. One count, two counts, three counts—

A wheezy breath. Nothing significant that would bring good air in.

Four counts. Five counts. Six counts. Seven. Eight.

Nothing.

George exhales unevenly and he can distantly hear Karl talking in the background. He can’t shut the door, not if George needs help but he also can’t leave those kids alone.

He grabs Adam’s face again, punches his nose tightly and covers his mouth with his own.

Two breaths. Make sure the chest raises.

George breaths. Then, he breaths again. The entire time he stares at the front of Adam’s t-shirt and nothing happens.

If not, adjust the airway. Two breaths.

He pulls up on Adam's head and does it again. His chest rises with the pushed air.

The glasses on George's face fall and he throws them to the side, shuffles over half an inch and raises on his knees. He links his fingers, palm over the back of his hand, and locks his elbows.

Thirty compressions.

Thirty. One, two, three--

He wants to cry. Maybe he is crying. George needs to help him. He isn't breathing.

Adam's head jerks with every compression, expression slack and red and lips almost blue—and George doesn't look at his face anymore, glares down at his knuckles that turn red with pressure and counts under his breath like he has any to spare.

“—thirteen, fourteen, fifteen—”

Children are small. You need to push at least to a depth of one-third of the child's chest.

George doesn't think he's pushing hard enough. He shuffles closer, finishes his first round and ducks to push two breaths again.

He wants this to be over.

Two breaths. Thirty compressions.

He pushes deeper, and counts.

“—fourteen, fifteen—”

Keep doing CPR until medical help arrives, or until you are no longer able to give quality care—

George gives two breaths again. The door behind him creaks just as he laces his fingers—

“Paramedics are here!”

George freezes where he kneels, barely sees the two dark blue suits that race beside him. He doesn't recognize them, not without his glasses, and just inches himself back on the floor as one gets close, leans down to put a plastic piece over Adam's mouth and breath in.

His palms hurt. His elbows hurt more.

“How many cycles did you get through?” One of them asks, and George swallows. The other is currently pumping into Adam's chest, arms strong where George's were becoming weak, and he falls back onto the carpeted floor.

“Five. I just started the fifth.”

The blurry faces nod and their mouth moves. They aren't talking to George.

“Get the AED started.”

A mechanical voice starts chanting instructions. George stumbles to his feet, unsure of what he can do here, but knowing what he can do outside. His legs shake as he walks towards the door, and Karl grabs his shoulder.

“George?” Karl murmurs, and George can only look at the blurry faces of the children clinging to their legs. Laura latches onto his knees and George nearly buckles. “Wh—“

“Okay!” George says, a cheery voice plastered on. “I’m going to make some phone calls. Are you guys okay to stay with Karl?”

“Mister George?”

“Hm?” George looks down blindly, and Laura’s tear slicked face stares back at him. He doesn’t know if he has tears of his own, and runs a hand through his hair like he can check. His wrist comes away dry, even if his fingers tremble.

“What happened to Adam?”

George freezes. He doesn’t know how to deal with this part. They don’t train you on this part, not the aftermath or the worry or the ache in his elbows.

He crouches down, and with a tight smile he lies through his fucking teeth.

“Adam got hurt. The people in there are helping him right now, and he’ll be better soon.”

I don’t know if Adam will be okay. Choking kills.

“What were you doing with Adam? On his stomach?”

Keeping him alive.

“I was helping him before the paramedics got here—” George sees Katarina blink at that, “—and now they can help him better than me. Now, I want everyone to follow Karl, and you guys can stay out in the back for a little. Is that alright?”

There’s no protests, either through fear or anxiety or just confusion, and George waits until Karl is out of sight with the kids before he sags against the wall. His fingers are trembling and his heart hasn’t calmed down since Adam first wheezed, and now there’s paramedics in his classroom and George has to call emergency contacts—

He puts a hand over his eyes. There’s no way he’s crying yet.

George can’t cry yet.

This is the part he doesn’t really remember. One of the paramedics — Sapnap, it’s Sapnap — came out and told him that Adam was conscious and alright. Scared and bruised, with a torn shirt from the AED patches and a sore throat.

A Lego piece. He tried to put a Lego piece in his mouth to use for later and ended up swallowing it.

Then, he choked.

Puffy gets there right after George calls Adam’s mom. She takes one look at him and tells him to wait in the staff room, she can call the rest of the parents. Apparently, she talked to Sapnap on the way in, him having just talked to George, and ushered the brunet down the hallway at the first instance she could.

George has his glasses back. Sapnap handed them to him right after they got Adam comfortable, and said Punz was going to wait with him for his mom.

The door to the staff room swings open. It's empty, cold and lit up and George's chest shakes on an inhale.

He reaches for a chair, numb to the cold of the plastic and nearly collapses on it when his legs finally give out. George leans his elbows on his knees, runs his hands through his hair and exhales slowly and somewhat steady. He tries to, at least.

He just did CPR on one of his kids. He had to do CP—fucking—R on one of his kids.

George doesn't know how to feel. He should have been watching better, paid more attention to the Lego table and not to the words in a book. Maybe he should have been wandering, not sitting down and static and maybe he could have told Adam not to put things in his mouth.

He's alright though, Sapnap assured him he was going to be okay.

Sudden voices outside the door make George jump, senses raw and haywire but he recognizes one of them as Laura's grandmother. Her emergency contact. Puffy must be calling all contacts and parents to take the kids home, which is understandable.

Puffy is Katarina's emergency contact. Dream is off today. No, wait, is Dream on call? He doesn't remember—

George screws his eyes shut and presses his palms into his eyes. His glasses clatter against the table he's sitting beside and he whines lightly, like the sound will stop the burning buildup in his temple and sinuses.

He wants to go home. George wants someone here. His cat, Puffy—

A snuffle escapes him.

He wants Dream.

George lets his mouth fall open, and rubs his eyes harder. The self-soothing motion does nothing, and George shrinks into himself.

More voices. It quiets down.

He hopes Adam's mom arrives soon, and then Adam can go home and be alright, and George doesn't have to do CPR on a child ever again.

The door squeaks, and George raises his head.

Dream closes the door behind him, and George's face crumples. He reaches out and Dream is there, taking his hand and accepting the tight grip George inflicts on him, crouching in front of the smaller man and putting a large hand on his knee. He doesn't know why Dream is here but someone must have called him, and George decides doesn't care about these minor details when Dream shuffles closer, nudging between his knees and keeping him steady.

George swallows as he looks at Dream, and Dream looks back. Golden eyes flick over his face, brow pinched in worry and *empathy* because he understands, and George said he wasn't going to cry, but—

"Dream, he—" George pleads, and Dream gently shushes him.

"George, it's alright. Adam is okay, you did everything right," Dream whispers, and George blinks

rapidly as a tear slides down his cheek. “Oh, sweetheart... I know, I know. You’re okay, I’m here now.”

Dream is here. Dream’s here.

George ducks his head as Dream’s cups his cheek, wipes away the trail of wetness. He sniffs again, and his voice is wobbly when he speaks: “I want to go home.”

“Okay. Okay, let’s get you home.” Dream stands slowly, and George refuses to let go of his hand. The blond tugs a little, and George manages to stand up. He wipes his face and grabs for his glasses, and Dream chews his lip. “I’ll take you home, baby, c’mon.”

“What about—” George hiccups, “What about the kids?”

Dream wraps an arm around George, and George curls into the warmth. He smells like laundry detergent and slight cologne, and something inherently Dream that George derives comfort from. The arm around him tightens and George presses his face to Dream’s chest when the other joins it, fully wrapped in an embrace that keeps him from breaking apart.

“They’ve all gone home, George, Mom called and they’re all home. Adam’s mom came and they’ve been instructed on what to do. Sapnap is going to take Karl home, and I’m going to take you home.”

“Katarina?”

“She’s with Mom. She’s safe.” George feels Dream press his cheek to his hair. A thumb rubs into his shoulder. “They’re all okay.”

George doesn’t say anything but nods against Dream’s sweater. He curls his arm around a slim waist and holds, doesn’t do anything else but stand there until he thinks his legs will work again.

“Can I lock up and then we can leave?”

“Do you want to do that?”

George nods. For some reason, it feels better if he does it, if he turns the key on the doors and switches lights until it’s dark and static. “Please.”

“Okay.” Dream doesn’t release him, not until George pulls his head back and looks up at the other; the blond gives him a small smile, and then presses a kiss to George’s forehead. “I’ll wait at the door. Come find me when you’re ready to go, alright?”

“Okay.”

George locks up methodically. He shuts the lights off and locks the doors, and avoids the main classroom completely until the very last second. Some chairs are moved and the tap is turned off, and he wonders how much trouble he’ll get in if he calls in sick for the next day.

True to his word, Dream waits by the front door until George finishes. They walk out, and George sits in the front seat with his head back against the headrest. Dream doesn’t say anything, but sets his hand down on the console as an invitation that George takes. His fingers are cold, but Dream’s grasp is warm.

George doesn’t know when they get to his apartment, but then Dream is asking if he wants him to come up and George didn’t know he was waiting for Dream to *ask*.

He hands Dream his keys and follows the other up the stairs. Dream carries his bag and unlocks the door, and lets them in. Cat meets them at the door, meowing and not understanding why her owner isn't scooping her up, giving her the affection he normally does.

George thinks that he's missing a lot of things. He doesn't feel very stable right now, maybe that's why.

Dream seems to understand. He helps George out of his jacket, says hello to Cat in the soft way cat owners do, and sets George's stuff down on the table close by. George kind of wanders, waits for Dream to nudge him towards the couch so he can sit and then moves around George's kitchen, learns where things are and grabs George a glass of apple juice in the same time it takes for George to inch his shoes off.

The couch bounces as Dream sits down beside George. He sets the glass on the coffee tables and leans his elbows on his knees to look at George. The brunet stares back, unsure what to say or do but still feeling that empty pit in his stomach.

He feels gross. George doesn't know what to do.

Dream's stable presence helps.

"I never, and I mean *never*," George starts, "want to do that again."

"I don't blame you," Dream answers, and raises his arm so George can lean into his side. "It's not a fun thing. What can I get you right now?"

George shrugs, and curls his legs up on the couch beside him. Dream shuffles them until George is putting all his weight into his side, and then drops the arm around his waist to secure the spot; the brunet hums at the nice pressure, and rests his head on Dream's collarbone.

"I don't know. I just feel like—kinda empty. That was horrifying." George's fingers seek out Dream's free hand, and he plays absently with the thicker digits. Dream lets him collect his thoughts. "Like, we're trained on what to do and I know I did it good because—because he's *okay*, but that doesn't mean I wanted to do it."

"Well," Dream hums, "You know that you did the right thing. Adam is alive and breathing because you were able to save him, and he can go home to his mom and family with only a few bruises and a sore throat. I know you don't want to do it again. CPR is terrifying to give, and it doesn't help when it's a child."

George nods against Dream's sweater. He rubs circles into Dream's knuckles, comforting himself more than the other with the movement.

"Are you going to stay home tomorrow?" Dream tangles their fingers together, and George sighs at both the contact and the question.

"I probably should. I know that Adam's mom isn't going to send him tomorrow and it's highly unlikely any other parent will want to. It might just be a day where nobody goes." Cat jumps up on the couch and crawls over George, settling in Dream's lap and under his elbow. George smiles softly and strokes over her back. "I'll call Puffy tonight then."

Dream nods, and they don't say much after that. George basks in the offered comfort, simply being held on his couch and in his home. The blond doesn't push him to speak, not about anything or anyone, and George keeps up the soothing motions on his cat and Dream's fingers.

He feels safe now, less jittery and it's a little funny, in a morbid way; the second time they really spend time alone and it's over a situation like this. Maybe it's his leftover and draining adrenaline acting up, but George snorts and Dream makes a questioning noise.

"Kind of a shitty second date, don't you think?"

The blond laughs at that, lightly and with a bouncing chest that makes George smile despite the events today. "Perhaps, but I get to spend time with you and that sounds like my ideal date. We can do something fun next time I'm off call and work, and not have to worry about events like today."

George's smile widens, and he makes a soft sound as his agreement. "Are you on call today?"

"Nope, I'm off. Mom has Rina, I have you, and we have nowhere to be. Kinda shitty that select conditions got us here, but it sounds pretty good for a second date, doesn't it?"

The brunet lifts his head, and Dream pulls his hand away long enough to wipe at the dried tears on the sides of George's eyes. He closes one as Dream rubs with the pad of his thumb, a soft frown taking over as his palm cups George's face. George lets him do it, stays still and static as Dream just... looks at him.

As if Dream wasn't already soft, George literally watches the blond's eyes melt when he smiles at him, and then that thumb is trailing down from his eyes to his cheekbone, the side of his nose to the corner of his mouth. George lets him, inhales softly as his eyes lower and Dream just keeps *looking* at him. "Dream..."

"Hm?" Golden eyes flick over his face, and George feels his cheeks warm. Dream's voice is a rasp, nearly dragging over George's skin. "What's up?"

"You—you're just—" George stutters, and the corners of Dream's lips rise. "I—"

He stops there, doesn't bother with anything else. It'll come out in a jumbled mess anyways, just a testament to what Dream can do to him when he really isn't doing anything. George reaches up and holds Dream's wrist, turning in towards him and tipping his chin up. Dream's smile secures itself, and the other leans in the slightest.

"Is this okay?" Dream mumbles, warm air puffing across George's nose as he speaks and George doesn't want anything else.

"Yes, please. Please kiss me," he whispers, and closes his eyes as Dream obeys.

Just like that first time however many weeks ago, Dream's lips are soft and he's warm against George's mouth. George makes a soft sound and presses into it, nothing more than him getting comfortable. Dream's thumb strokes his cheek, and George feels his forehead press into his own.

They part gently, and George keeps his eyes closed as Dream tilts his head with his hand and comes back, dragging his lips across George's because Dream knows what he needs, how he needs it. George doesn't want passion or lust right now; he wants comfort. He wants warmth, stability, and Dream is offering it to him.

Somehow, they seem to click, and George sighs into the kiss happily. He feels Dream smile against his lips, and they part for the second time.

"Feeling better?" Dream asks, and George nods, stretching his head up to steal one more honey kiss from the blond. Dream smiles, and leans down to lengthen it again. When he speaks, it's right against George's mouth. "Good. How about you go hop in the shower, and I can make us

something to eat, hm?"

"I don't even know what I have for groceries," George responds, and Dream shrugs.

"I'm a single father, we're meant to be resourceful. Seriously, go wash up and I'll have something ready by the time you're out."

George looks between Dream's eyes for a second, and wonders just simply how he got so lucky with this amazing man. He really could fall in love with him, George thinks, and the thought isn't nearly as scary as it should be. "What, you don't want to join me?"

Dream takes the joke for what it is, but the kiss he leaves George with speaks volumes. "Hm, you drive a hard bargain but I'll have to take a raincheck. Next time?"

"You're an idiot," George laughs, but gets up from the couch and leans his hand on the armrest so he can kiss Dream again. The other sits up into it and George licks his lips after. "Next time. Have fun exploring my kitchen, pots are all in low cabinets and there's pasta in the back of the pantry."

Dream watches him leave, and George laughs to himself as he closes the bathroom door. He doesn't know how Dream managed to turn his day around, but perhaps it has something to do with personal experience and a simple desire to help take care of him.

Maybe it's something more. Maybe it's something George can trust, and even as he starts his shower and listens through the door to Dream talking to Cat, he thinks that it's something he wants to keep.

Dream as his. George as Dream's.

"Heh," George laughs as he steps under the hot water, "Sounds... that sounds kind of nice."

He's not lying, and maybe it should be scary. Maybe it should be terrifying, because George doesn't normally do relationships but here he is, showering as Dream makes him a meal in his own home.

It's nice. He likes it.

George hopes that there is plenty more to come.

Chapter End Notes

ty for all the support on this:) the last chapter is coming out soon, your comments give me life and i appreciate you all<3

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

A hum, and then Dream is planting one last kiss on his lips. “Alright. What do you—”

“Dad?”

Oh. They forgot about the child.

Chapter Notes

the last chapter ;-;

it's shorter but sweet, all fluff kind of thing:)
i hope you enjoy<3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“What?”

“Look, I’m really sorry, but—”

“Dream, c’mon—”

“It’s just I’m so busy and I don’t have the time and i don’t know what to do—”

“Dream—”

“George—”

“Dream!” George laughs into his phone, listening to the other panic on the connected line for really no reason. “Calm down, baby. I’ll go get Rina and you can meet us at the park when you get off. What time are you for sure off?”

“Uh, five. I’m totally done at five.”

“Okay then,” George grabs his house keys off the counter and his bus pass —he found it tucked between his bed and nightstand, Cat probably got ahold of it — and snatches a light jacket off a hook for later. “I’ll go get her from Celiel’s, and then we can walk to the park or to your house depending on her mood. Sound good?”

“God, you’re an angel, thank you, George,” comes Dream’s reply on the phone, and George blushes as he tucks his phone between his shoulder and ear to lock his door. *“I’ll buy something for dinner on the way home, and meet you wherever you are at that time?”*

“Perfect, just text me and I’ll give you a location or something,” George holds his phone steady as

he walks down the stairs, “Celiel knows I’m coming?”

“Yeah, I told her my boyfriend was coming to get Katarina.”

George smiles, knowing Dream can’t see it but can probably hear it. It’s been a few months since they started speaking, weeks since their first kiss, and George is happy to say he’s comfortable with where they are.

Dream always has a way of throwing curveballs into it, he has found — random date nights, outings that seem like *family* outings when they bring Katarina, dinner with Puffy — and George loves every single bit of it.

There’s an undertone of nervousness in Dream’s voice, because they haven’t labelled themselves yet and while they’ve had a few little conversations about *them*, there’s been nothing put in stone yet. He does, however, very much like the idea of being Dream’s boyfriend. “Yeah? What else did you say about this boyfriend of yours?”

“Oh, you know... how he’s so pretty, gorgeous, amazing with kids, always knows what to say. He’s an amazing kisser too, wow—”

“Dream!” George laughs, and steps out into the sunlight of midday, breathing in the fresher air than inside his apartment and makes his way down the street. It’s nice out, he feels good, and he’s going to see his favorite little girl soon. “Is this your roundabout way of asking me out?”

“Uh... kinda? I was going to take you out tonight but then Mom said she was busy, Sapnap is going on a date with Karl and Celiel apparently is busy as well. Sorry.” Something shuffles on Dream’s end and George stops to wait for traffic at a crosswalk. *“We can still have a mini date tonight, but like after I put Rina to bed and stuff.”*

“Dream, it’s alright. I’d love to be your boyfriend.” George is grinning wide now, cheeks red in the middle of the street as his *boyfriend* stutters over the scuffed proposal and tries to backtrack—not on the offer to date, but just the situation. “You’re an idiot if you think I would say no to you on this, you dummy. I really like you, I don’t care about the formalities.”

Dream laughs and George reaches the bus stop. *“Yeah? Well, my lovely boyfriend, I need to get back to work before Sapnap gets on my ass about it. I’ll see you in a few hours?”*

“See you then,” George answers, and they say a quick goodbye just as the bus settles down in front of him.

He’s excited, really. He hasn’t been to Dream’s house in a while, not with their conflicting schedules and hour long dates when they can sneak them in. Dream was called out in the middle of one last week, and George received a panicked phone call from Karl that the electricity in the daycare went down on the next attempted outing.

Really, neither of them cared; it was enough to be able to see each other on the weekends and at pick up and drop off times, and then in the shadow of Dream’s car when George ran out on their matching lunch breaks.

Dream’s addicting mouth has nearly made him late a few times, but George has never once complained. The kisses he gets while leant over the centre console of the car are always better than the last, and are always sweetened by caramel coffee.

And now, after all those times spent with desperate company and belonging, they’re *together*.

George is happy and honestly a little (read: a lot) in love, and he can only hope Dream is equally as enamoured with him.

(If the desperate and lingering kiss the blond gave him just before he ran out of time on his break wasn't enough of a clue, the way Dream just gazes at George is plenty. George has never felt so *loved* in his life.)

Dream had sent George the address to Katarina's mothers house, and had instructed Celiel to tell the little girl that George was coming so she knew who was picking her up. George hopes it isn't too much of a shock, but it's Rina and the girl is super adaptable. She knows Dream and George are at least friends, and maybe she would be open to them being something more.

Hopefully.

Easy, George. One step at a time.

Celiel's house is nice, small and sized perfectly for a woman on her own. George walks up the little stone path, notes the lack of children's toys around that you would normally find at a mother's house and the minimalistic decoration, and then he reaches the front door.

Nerves have his hand shaking as he knocks, and George waits patiently for Katarina's mother. It doesn't take long, but it's enough for George to check his phone again to make sure the address is right and for him to almost send a text to Dream about the appearance of the house. The door opens, and he looks up with a slight smile.

Celiel stands there, dressed in leisure clothing that somehow still fits her uptight aura. George doesn't mind her, she's a nice woman if not a bit pushy, and he can see how she would have been pretty around the time Katarina was born.

Not that she's not pretty now. He's just more interested in her ex. Kinda funny how that works, hm?

"Hi Celiel," George offers, and the woman blinks at him. She doesn't look surprised, but it must be a little weird to see the daycare teacher there and being called Katarina's father's *boyfriend*. Celiel shakes it off quick, and smiles at him.

"George, how are you?"

"Good, thank you. I'm here for Katarina?"

He barely gets the words out of his mouth before Katarina is barreling through the door, crashing into his legs and almost making George stumble off the front step. He reaches for the open door, grabs it and holds himself up as the other hand comes down to land on Rina's shoulder. She doesn't say anything but rubs her face into George's upper leg and he just sighs.

"She's not having a good day and has been restless all morning." Celiel leans against the doorframe and looks down at her daughter. George sees the odd... lack of motherly care for her. It's strange, but he doesn't say anything as Celiel speaks. "Let me grab her backpack. I'll be right back."

"Alright." The door shuts and George looks down at the girl, who refuses to bring her face up from his pant leg. "Katarina, darling? Would you like to head to the park or home after this?"

There's a mumbled reply, but George doesn't have time to decode it before Celiel returns with a purple bag in hand and small shoes. George didn't even realize the little girl was sockfooted, but he

takes them and sets them down on the step. Celiel hovers for a second, but then must decide there's nothing she can really do.

"Bye, Katarina," she says, and the blonde just nods into George's leg. He smiles and says goodbye as well, albeit a little less kindly now that he's seen the standoffish way the woman treats her own child, and then the door shuts. George gently pulls Rina back from himself, and crouches down in front of her.

There's red marks on her eyes, ones that tell George that she's been crying. He doesn't mention it.

"Alright, let's get your shoes on. Then, we can go to the park for a bit and Dad will bring supper home. Does that sound alright?" George reaches for one purple runner and helps it on her foot, all while Katarina rubs at her irritated eyes and nods. "Yeah? What do you like about the park? I like the swings a lot."

"T-the slides," Katarina mumbles, and George hums as he gets the other shoe on. "I like the slides. Dad doesn't fit on them."

"Well, I'm not Dad but *I* fit on the slides. When we get there, you can decide if you want me to come down with you, okay?" George stands up and offers a hand, slinging the backpack over his shoulder with ease. Katarina's small fingers wrap around his own, and he smiles as he helps her down the steps. "For now, how about we just look at the clouds? I'll take us to where we need to go, and you take a look around. Tell me what colors you see."

They get to the sidewalk and George walks on the streetside. Katarina kicks a rock by accident and it skitters across the pavement. "I thought you couldn't see colors, Mister George."

"I can see some of them. I like the color blue the most. And," George looks down at Katarina, whose mood has seemed to significantly improve since leaving the house, "You don't have to call me 'mister' here. Just George works."

"Okay George!" Katarina chirps, and then there's a moment of silence. Then: "George?"

"Hm?"

"Are you friends with Dad?"

George nods and they wait at a crosswalk. He remembers answering this question before, but doesn't mind repeating it a few times. It's not like kids have amazing memories when it comes to conversation. "Mhm, your dad and I are definitely friends. We get to all hang out together tonight, though, that's pretty cool."

Katarina gasps and the light changes. George gently pulls her with him off the curb and she jumps down onto the street with both feet. "Are we having a sleepover?"

"Ooh, maybe we can. I'll have to ask Dad first, though, right? Maybe you can introduce me to Patches." They cross the street and George nods at the elderly lady that passes by, who gives him a smile and the girl beside him a little wave. Katarina shyly ducks behind George and he laughs, but doesn't pull her away or out from her little protection wall. "Which way do you think the park is, love?"

"Um..." Katarina peers around, curls a little wild in the back and only to get more untamed as the day goes on. She points, one hand latched to George's still and the other removed from his pant leg. "That way."

George looks to where she points, and surprisingly enough she's right. "Good! Let's cross over here, and then we can keep going."

The park is decidedly busy for a Saturday, but George doesn't mind because at least the playground portion of it is free. Katarina makes a noise of excitement as they get closer, and George finds an empty bench close by to set her bag and his things down on. He keeps his phone in his back pocket, just in case.

"Alright, do we want to go on the slides first?" George asks, and Katarina only offers him a brilliant grin.

"I'll win!"

"Win what—" George has no time before Katarina takes off in a sprint over the grass, racing towards the play structure with curls flying out behind her. George laughs before jogging after her, not quite catching up because children are surprisingly quick.

They play on the slides and the swings for a while, poking their heads into the plastic cutouts available and making up words off the word search on the side of the structure. Rina finds a few bugs, and George tries his best not to grimace.

("George, look! It's a beetle!")

"Oh, lovely. Don't put that in your mou—Katarina!")

George helps the girl across the bridge, stays on the ground and holds her hand high above his head as she walks across, and gets her to pose for a picture at the bottom of the slide.

Katarina convinces George to come down with her and he does, the girl tucked between his knees and her small fingers clenching his legs with the little twists in the slide. A stranger takes a picture of them there, capturing the pure happiness on Katarina's face and the fond look on George's. They both have flushed cheeks and messy hair and nearly askew glasses, and George makes sure to send that one off to Dream as soon as he sees it.

Coincidentally, it's about the same time that Dream is getting off work. Just as George sends the message, Dream's little typing bubble pops up.

From: dream<3

you guys are so cute holy shit

im off now:) omw to the park, sit tight

From: george

okay:]

"Dad says he's on the way, Rina," George says to the girl, both of them sitting on the park bench and waiting now. It's late enough that Katarina is probably due for either sleep or a much needed nap, because she bobs her head sleepily and fiddles with a glasses cloth George had in his wallet.

George leans against the back of the seat and trails a hand over the top of it, playing gently with the tangled curls on her head. “Oh, duckling, your hair is a mess. Let’s brush it when we get home, alright?”

Katarina looks over at him, adoration and awe shining in her eyes. “You called me duckling.”

George freezes, unable to really read her tone and hoping her eyes mean it’s something good. “I did. Would you like me not to?”

A firm head shake. “No, I liked it. Dad calls me that too, it’s good.”

“Alright,” George murmurs, and Katarina goes back to playing with the cloth. She’s humming something to herself, not really paying attention but kind of gazing around. “Dad should be here any moment, and then we can walk to the car and go home. Aren’t you hungry?”

“A little—oh, look!”

George turns his head, and there, walking across the grass in his blue-hoodied glory is Dream. He looks tired but happy, and his grin only widens when Rina hops off the bench and grabs George’s closest hand, dragging them both closer. He has half a mind to grab the backpack off the bench as well.

Dream crouches down to scoop his daughter up, settling her on one arm and on his hip. The other arm wraps around George’s waist and pulls him closer to his other side. Katarina loops her arms around Dream’s neck, and kicks her legs out as she looks down at George. “Look! I’m bigger than George!”

Dream chuckles and plants a kiss to her head. She presses into it, cheeks red with given affection and adoration for her father. “That you are, duckling. How was your day? Did you have fun with George?”

“Mhm!” The child pats her hands excitedly on Dream’s shoulder, and George just smiles at the two. He leans into Dream’s side, and the hand on his lower back slips just under his sweater, caressing the warm skin of his spine. “We went to the slides and swings and did the word stuff. I want to show George Patches, though, can we have a sleepover?”

Dream blinks, and looks over at George. There’s something burning in his gaze, a simple want and curiosity that has George going soft. “A sleepover, huh? What do you think, George? Wanna sleepover with us?”

George smiles, soft and sweet and reaches out to pinch the toe of Katarina’s shoe teasingly. “I would love to, if you’re going to have me. I do need to run home and feed Cat, though, so maybe we should do that quickly. Rina, would you like to see Cat?”

George is met with an affirmative — he didn’t expect anything else — and Dream lets the suddenly energetic girl slide down his body until she lands on the ground again. Katarina immediately reaches for both Dream and George’s hands, putting her in the middle with two handholds. “Dad, let’s go!”

Dream chuckles and looks over at George’s between the gap. George smiles back, and they start walking towards the car; he hands the backpack to Dream over her head and glances down as his arm starts to swing. Katarina walks on, oblivious to her own movements and humming a song to herself happily.

“You wanna swing, darling?” George says suddenly, and Rina looks up at him with a toothy grin.

“Can I?”

George gives her an answer by tugging on her hand, and Dream does the same. “Ready? One, two, three—!”

Katarina’s giggles are the purest thing he’s heard as she swings between their hands, and her feet land on the grass with twin *thump* and a plea for them to do it again. Dream laughs, and George and him swing the small girl all the way to the car.

“Alright, duckling. Let’s get you buckled in.” Dream ducks inside the backseat of the car, and George stands right beside it as he waits for his lover. It doesn’t take long, and soon Dream is closing the door and straightening with a smile. “And for you—“

George laughs as Dream wraps an arm around his waist and pulls him in, kissing the smile off his lips as they meet in the middle. His smaller hands land against Dream’s chest, pulling at his sweater and keeping him there for a few seconds longer.

Dream smiles at him as they part and reaches up with his free hand to straighten the glasses on George’s face. “Hi, baby.”

“Hi.” George rocks up on his toes to kiss his boyfriend again. “Am I really staying over tonight?”

“If you want. I’d love to have you there.”

“Consider me packed.” George pats his chest and then dances away, rounding the front of the car and grabbing the handle. “Take me home real quick and then we can head to yours, yeah? Rina can meet my cat.”

So they go. The little girl has the time of her life petting Cat, all while George quickly packs an overnight bag and makes sure his cat has enough food for the next day as well. It’s the weekend, and he doesn’t know what time he’ll be home so it’s better safe than sorry.

Dream snatches the packed bag from George’s hands, earning a protest that’s quickly shushed and a gleeful smile from the blond. Katarina wants to help as well, so George gives her a light tote bag with his extra glasses in them for her to haul out to the car. The two adults steal another kiss before they head out of the building, and then they’re well on their way to their home.

The front of the house is nice, bricked along the lower portion and with plenty of random toys scattered over the porch area. George snorts at the sight of a pink flamingo near a bush when they pull into the driveway, and Katarina launches into a well spoken explanation of where they got it and how it earned the name Purple.

George knows Katarina’s favourite colour, and he also knows Dream is a sucker for anything regarding his daughter.

(He can’t blame his boyfriend. George is wrapped around her pudgy little pinky too.)

Katarina insists on carrying the tote bag inside, and George isn’t able to grab his own bigger bag before Dream scoops it up, grinning at him with childish glee because all those times Dream drove him home, said goodbye to him at the bus stop when the last vehicles ran that night... all those times have stopped.

George isn’t leaving tonight. He can stay in the warm cradle of Dream’s arms, wrapped up in his scent and safety and the pure domesticity of it all. He adores it, truly.

Patches is adorable. She takes to George right away, crawling into his lap when he sits on the couch with Rina. Dream says he's going to put the bag in George's room, and excitement laces through his chest when Dream opens a door, steps halfway through, and then when Rina isn't looking mouths the words *this is mine* at George, and proceeds to put his bag inside the doorway.

Just because George's bag is in Dream's room doesn't mean they're going to share a bed, but holy shit does George want to.

If Dream's hugs and simple touches are anything to go by, the way that the man will feel when they're alone, hugged by soft blankets and strong arms and under the hazy layer of sleep. George wants that. He *wants* the comfort, the affection, the feeling of being wanted and does Dream ever give that to him.

"Alright, I'm going to get food ready. George, want to help me? I'm sure Rina wants to watch something for a bit, hm?" Dream reaches over the couch to grab the remote, and George tips his head back into the solid shoulder of his lover. The television flickers on, and Katarina is instantly captivated by whatever cartoon Dream switches too. The blond leans down, and George turns his head a little. "Let's go make supper."

George gets up and follows Dream to the kitchen, setting a gentle hand on Rina's head as he passes and then moving on easily. She's fully involved in the cartoon now, mouth open as she blinks at the characters, and George has no qualms about sidling right up to Dream in the kitchen.

The other puts a steady hand on his hip, and George tips his face up towards Dream as a simple invitation. Dream grins and takes it, leans down to press a gentle kiss to his lips and just exist there with him. George settles back down on flat feet and gazes up at Dream, unabashedly staring with puppy love in his eyes and sweet, sweet happiness. "How was your day?"

"Quiet," Dream responds, and inches him in towards a countertop so George can lean his hip against it. One of Dream's hands comes around and lands on the surface, nearly pinning him there with minimal touch. George wouldn't want to move anyways. "It was quiet, and I'm grateful for it. We moved a few patients, had some calls that ended up just being transferred in themselves. Nothing too shattering."

"Good." George reaches up and curls his fingers around the neckline of Dream's hoodie, leans back fully against the countertop and pulls the other in with him. A quick glance tells George that Katarina is still occupied, and he drags Dream to his lips for a deeper kiss. His words slur, but Dream still understands him. "That's good.."

"Mm," Dream agrees, and then George feels strong hands under his thighs and Dream is lifting him onto the counter; George inhales sharply, can't stop the giggle that escapes him when he settles on the surface. He's nearly the same height as Dream now, and their noses brush as Dream steps between his legs; his hipbones brush the insides of George's thighs, and he squeezes his knees teasingly. "I think so too. How was yours? Did Rina give you trouble?"

Dream's hands run up his legs, and George shivers at the feeling. "No, of course not. It was good, we had fun, she found a few bugs—"

He's cut off with a kiss and would never find it in himself to complain.

"I received a new phone background..." Dream says cheekily, knowing exactly what he did and loving the mischief behind it as George hums. He gets kissed again, and runs his fingers through shorter blond hair. Dream licks into George's mouth, easy and practised (it is). "And now we're home, in the kitchen, making out—"

“I thought we were—” George’s mouth is covered by Dream’s again and he stifles a gasp as Dream’s fingers tighten on his thighs, “—I thought w-we were making food...”

Dream pulls back a small inch, licking his lips deviously. “But you taste—”

George covers his mouth with his palm, a laugh startled out of him that echoes around the kitchen. “Don’t even start, you idiot. Let’s get food going, and we can, *ahem*, continue later, alright?”

A hum, and then Dream is planting one last kiss on his lips. “Alright. What do you—”

“Dad?”

Oh. They forgot about the child.

George turns, looks over at Katarina who stands by the stove. She’s looking between George and her father, and the two of them look between each other, really unsure of where to go with this. Dream subtly takes his hands off George’s thighs, and then offers a palm to his daughter.

She doesn’t look angry or upset; there’s just a simple confusion on her face that soothes a bit of George’s nerves. Katarina takes Dream’s hand and he sits her up on the counter beside George, gets her on the same level as them for a more... serious talk.

“So, Katarina...” Dream starts, obviously fumbling and not sure where to go, “I’m sure you know George and I are friends, but we’re also, uh... together?”

Katarina frowns, and George crosses his ankles where they dangle. She’s holding a small toy, just a simple giraffe plush, and looks back at her father with a serious face.

“Is George our family now?”

“Uh—” Dream clears his throat and looks over at George briefly. “I would like that, but we would talk about it fir—”

“George can be part of our family if he wants!” Katarina exclaims suddenly, and George chuckles despite his anxiety, “He could be my other dad, right?”

Oh.

Oh.

He really likes that.

George looks at Dream. The other is staring at his daughter, eyes wide and lips twitching into a stifled smile.

It looks like Dream really likes that idea too. He looks like he really, really likes that, and George feels Dream’s hand creep to tangle with his own. They squeeze at the same time.

“He could be, if he wanted that. But, Rina, you’re okay with me and George being together?”

Katarina raises a sassy brow like it’s obvious. “He’s our family now.”

“Okay. Okay, uh,” Dream’s words are scuffed by the wide smile on his face, and George hops off the counter to help urge him towards the pantry. “What do we want to eat?”

“Pasta!” Rina’s legs kick against the counter and George stays nearby, just in case she decides to

kick a little harder and risks falling off. “Can we make pasta?”

“You heard the chef, Dad,” George calls over his shoulder, “She wants pasta. You better get to it.”

Dream snorts as he walks back over, a package of dry noodles in one hand and a wide smile on his face. He comes up right beside George, sets the other hand on his back and rubs gently. “Yeah, yeah. You can start with washing both of your hands, you monsters, and then maybe you can run this kitchen.”

His flush doesn’t leave, nor does the heart wrenching *melting adoring loving* gaze Dream gives his daughter as she tries and fails to put pasta in the lukewarm water, all with George’s help.

Supper is an easy affair, and Katarina eats her fill of messy noodles sliced into smaller pieces and peas without much fuss. Dream and George no longer worry about hiding their blatant affection, and George receives and gives out a fair share of kisses all through the evening.

They don’t taste like caramel coffee but instead like tomato and spices and home, and George doesn’t know which one is better.

(Neither. He’s greedy, and he wants both.)

Dream puts Katarina to bed soon after she nearly falls asleep at the table, face stained with pasta sauce and fingers sticky. George helps him clean up the table and kitchen as he tackles his daughter, and then George is trailing after Dream with a sleepy Katarina looking over a broad shoulder at him.

Her room is dark, and Dream gently tucks her into purple colored sheets and sets her glasses in a case on her side table. A small night light sits in the corner, and George leans his shoulder against the open door frame as Katarina mumbles her good nights.

Dream kisses her on the forehead. “Goodnight, duckling. Sleep well, alright?”

Katarina hugs the plush from before to her chest. “Mm, goodnight, Dad. Goodnigt, George,” she mumbles, reaching out with one hand and waving droopily at the man in the doorway. George’s heart melts and he comes in, meeting her outstretched fingers and crouching down to stroke his fingers over her hair.

“Goodnight, darling,” he whispers, “I’ll see you in the morning.”

Dream closes the door, leaving a slight inch of room before it latches shut, and then the two of them head back out to the main room. Neither of them really speak and when they do it’s in hushed tones, simple things like the food and the plans for tomorrow, what they want for breakfast and if Dream steals the covers at night.

(“You definitely seem like a blanket hog,” George murmurs, and the scandalized look Dream serves him only proves him right. “God, you’re terrible.”)

George washes the dishes and Dream dries and puts them away, elbows bumping and small kisses landed on exposed skin when the other isn’t looking. He feels happy, light and carefree like he hasn’t in a long time. Dream keeps wrapping his arms around him, taking advantage that George has wet fingers and can’t exactly fight back.

Dream gets a soapy palm patted on his face for his troubles, and George’s laughter is swallowed as he’s pulled into another kiss.

They finally get to bed, shutting off the lights and locking the doors. Patches trails after Dream, having been sleeping on the couch through most of the evening and now deciding she wants to be a part of things, and Dream opens the bedroom door to let her in.

George watches as he turns the light on and shucks his sweater off, throwing it over the bed carelessly and leaving him in a thin shirt and his pants. Dream looks over at George and motions vaguely with his hands.

“I’m gonna go make sure everything is off and stuff. Feel free to get changed, the door through there is another bathroom, but I’ll knock when I come back.”

“Okay,” George whispers back, and turns towards his bag to grab his sleeping clothes out of it. He sets it on the bed, takes out a pair of grey shorts and briefs and goes to grab for a shirt—

The blue of Dream’s hoodie catches his eye, and George hesitates.

It doesn’t take him long to change, and he brushes his teeth in Dream’s bathroom. There’s a shower in here, stocked with more of Dream’s personal soaps and washes, and George is glad he isn’t a guy that uses a million-in-one for all body parts.

George hears a knock, and then the door creak as he rinses his mouth, and listens to Dream talking quietly to Patches for a few seconds before coming out into the main bedroom again. He leans against the doorframe, and watches his boyfriend.

Dream isn’t facing him, but doesn’t seem worried as he continues to change his conversation to the brunet.

“There should be another outlet on the side for your phone, and I’m pretty sure that if we need them I have extra blankets—” Dream turns, stops his sentence short when he takes in George’s figure and the specific blue hoodie he’s wearing. The blond licks his lips and then shakes his head with a smile, but doesn’t tell George to take it off. “You’re going to be the death of me, I swear. Like I was *saying*, because you think I’m a blanket hog we do have extras.”

“Mm, sounds good. I think I’ll test my luck tonight, though,” George quips as he walks towards the bed and crawls in, loving the softness of the blankets and the comfort that comes with them. They smell like Dream, George finds as he lays down, and the pillow under his head draws him in deeper. It’s the soft thrill in his stomach that prompts him to keep speaking: “Are you coming to bed soon?”

Dream has just been staring at him, and George’s words seem to pull him out of that little daze. “Y-yeah, I’ll be right there. You gonna fall asleep?”

“Hm, maybe. Your bed is comfy.” George snuggles into the sheets and Dream just huffs out a laugh at him, holding his own clothing to go change into. “If you need me I’ll just be here, in, like, Heaven or something.”

Dream takes less time to change than George, and he shuts the light off in the bathroom and bedroom when he returns. The blond takes the vacant side of the bed and George shuffles a little closer, desperate for contact like he’d been deprived of it. In reality, George had all the contact he so desired and more, and as Dream wraps an arm around his waist to pull him in, he’s not complaining.

Dream makes a soft sound as George curls into him, finding a nice place under Dream’s chin with his nose against his neck and settling in like he belongs there. They maneuver a bit, finding a

comfy position and then both of them let out content sighs. Dream has an arm curled under his pillow and George's head, and the other tugs him in close.

George kisses the hollow of Dream's throat. "Thank you for letting me sleep over."

A small laugh vibrates in Dream's chest. He's so warm. "Thank you for staying. I really like having you here, I really do. I—"

The blond cuts himself off, and George drapes an arm over Dream's waist. He feels safe here, enveloped in a heavy and thick embrace in the darkness of a new bedroom; Dream's heartbeat pounds in his chest, rapid despite their resting state and he can tell why. George hums sleepily, and closes his eyes as he speaks first.

"I love you."

Dream's chest rises on an inhale and then falls, and George feels the kiss placed against the crown of his head.

"You're such an idiot."

"Too soon?"

"No. Never." Dream pulls him tighter if that's even possible, and George feels loved, loved, loved. "I love you too. I love you. You're the best thing that's ever happened to us."

George smiles, feeling light from his head to his toes to his fingers wrapped in the collar of Dream's shirt. He feels Dream breathe in the scent of him, something he finds endearing because he knows how much the smell of the other comforts himself, and George yawns widely before he can get another word out.

Dream chuckles softly, and a large hand strokes down his back and tucks under the hoodie George stole. "Go to sleep, sweetheart. I'll be here in the morning. Maybe we can make pancakes."

George thinks he agrees, but the lure of sleep and comfort is too great and he finds himself slipping off quickly. Dream's fingers are warm against his spine and they circle over his skin, and the last brushes of a kiss to his hair have George falling asleep completely.

It's the best sleep he's had in a while, and George knows that he will never want anything else other than Dream.

"Clap once if you hear me, clap twice if you hear me!"

George stands at the front of the classroom, commanding the attention of small children with ease. They look at him with wide eyes and primed hands, and George smiles as he points at the clock.

"It's time to go home! Let's collect our bags and toys, and then say hello to our parents, yeah?"

Small feet scramble over the carpet floor, packing their bags and chattering among themselves as they get ready to leave once again. George helps where he can, tying up shoes and assisting with zippers on tricky jackets. Wyatt asks him to save a book for next week, and Abbey makes sure

George knows that the dolls are sleeping soundly.

George helps off the kids to their parents, and then only one is left.

“Rina, darling? Are you ready to go?”

“Coming!”

Katarina jumps down from George’s chair where she was happily swinging her feet, playing with a new fidget toy George just got in this week. He holds his hand out for the girl and nods at Karl as they head out, trusting his coworker to safely lock the building up. Karl is capable, and George really has no worry as him and the girl exit.

“—and then I wanted to join Abbey but maybe next time I will. Is that okay?”

George nods and slings his bag higher up onto his shoulder. “Of course. Now, do you see Dad’s car?”

It doesn’t take long seeing as Dream is walking towards them, but Katarina still points it out and George lets her race towards her father, an excited grin on her face as she runs across the parking lot. Dream scoops her up in the same motion, laughing at the look on her face and easily coming over to George.

“Hello, duckling. How was your day?” Dream asks, and Rina babbles on about what they did, where they went, *everything*. It’s a lot, but she does eventually run out of words and Dream nods his approval. “Sounds fun. I’ll tell you about my day in the car, but first—”

Dream reaches out for George and the other slides into his embrace comfortably, leaning up to kiss Dream like he’d been missing since they got dropped off this morning. The blond smiles as he pulls away, and George tucks his fingers into Dream’s front pant pocket. “Hi.”

“Hi, sweetheart. Ready to go?” Dream peeks over him at Captain’s Care, and George nods.

“Yeah, Karl is going to lock up today. Let’s head home.”

“Home time! Can we get ice cream?” Katarina wraps an arm around Dream’s neck as they turn towards the car, and George just laughs.

“Sure, are you paying?”

“No way!” Katarina giggles as Dream bounces her, and one of her hands flies towards George.

“Papa can pay this time!”

Papa can pay this time—

George’s eyes widen and he looks at Dream, the same expression reflected there. He opens his mouth, feels a smile tugging at his lips and just... lets it happen.

“Of course, darling. Papa is going to pay this time.”

That earns George a bright face and shining eyes, and Dream reaches with his free hand towards George’s. They both squeeze, silent happiness reflected in the hold and George’s cheeks hurt from how hard he’s grinning. He’s never felt this before. He’s never felt this *happy* before.

Dream buckles the child into the car, and George smiles through the window at his—their daughter, waving and earning one in return before rounding the vehicle and climbing in.

He holds Dream's hand just behind the gearshift with no hesitation, and when they get to the ice cream parlour Dream makes sure George has no chance to pay.

("Dad always pays, right?"

"Mm, Papa said he would though."

"Well, maybe Papa can take care of supper tonight, hm? Would you like that instead, darling?"

"Oh... okay. Dad's cooking is bad today."

"Duckling, what in the world does that mean?"")

George cleans up ice cream from Katarina's fingertips and kisses the taste of rum and butter off Dream's lips. He's warm here, under the gleeful gaze of a distracted child and his lover, and George—

Well. Isn't that decided then?

He's not giving this up for anything.

Chapter End Notes

ty for coming on this ride with me:) i enjoyed writing this a lot and honestly, kidfics are so cute 10/10 love them

End Notes

thank you for reading! i hope you enjoyed:)
come say hi on [twitter!](#) !!

as always, yell at me in the comments and stay safe<3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!